

# Doing the Impossible



## SABBATH—FEBRUARY 27

**READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON:** Isaiah 50:4–10; Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12; Isaiah 53:3–9; Isaiah 53:10–12.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But he was being punished for what we did. He was crushed because of our guilt. He took the punishment we deserved [earned], and this brought us peace” (Isaiah 53:5, ERV).



Lough Fook wants to give these Chinese slaves hope in the Good News about Jesus.

**LOUGH FOOK** is a Chinese Christian. His heart is filled with pity for many people from his country who are slaves in mines in South America. Lough Fook wants to give these Chinese slaves the hope in the Good News about Jesus. But how can Lough Fook go to them? He comes up with the answer. He will sell himself as a slave for five years. Then he is sent to the mines in Demerara. He works in the mines and tells many people about Jesus.

Then Lough Fook dies. But not before 200 people accept Jesus as their Savior.

Lough Fook is a powerful example of someone who gives up everything to help other people. Wow! What an example of the love of God!

Jesus also became “a servant” (Philippians 2:7, ERV). Jesus came to help people. They were slaves to sin. Jesus came to give them hope and make them free.

Isaiah told us all about this work. Isaiah told us about it many hundreds of years before Jesus came to this earth. This week, we will look at what Isaiah said about Jesus.

**THE SUFFERING SERVANT (Isaiah 50:4–10)**

**Read Isaiah 50:4–10. What are these verses saying? What do these verses show you about Jesus?**

In Isaiah 49:7, we learned that people hate the Servant of God. “ ‘He is now a slave to rulers [leaders]’ ” (Isaiah 49:7, ERV). But “ ‘kings will see you and stand up to honor you. Princes will see you and bow down to show you their respect’ ” (Isaiah 49:7, NIV). The Servant also is a gentle Teacher. His words make weak people strong (Isaiah 50:4). People will hit the Servant and beat Him. He must suffer so that He can save humans.

This suffering is awful to us. But in the Near East during Bible times, honor is very important. If someone insults another person, then the person who got hurt will try to get even.

King David attacked and beat the country of Ammon (2 Samuel 10:1–12). Why? Because the king of Ammon “took David’s officers and shaved off one half of their beards. He cut off their clothes at the hips. Then he sent them away” (2 Samuel 10:4, ERV). But look at what happens when people hit the Servant in Isaiah 50. They beat Him. They pull out hairs from His beard. They spit at Him. The Servant is the King of kings (compare Isaiah 9:6, 7 and Isaiah 11:1–16). He is the Savior of the whole earth. He controls everything on heaven and earth. But He does not save Himself! This is very strange! People have a hard time believing it is true. When Jesus is on the cross, leaders laugh at Jesus and make fun of Him. They say, “ ‘If he is God’s Chosen One, the Christ, then let him save himself. He saved other people, didn’t he?’ ” (Luke 23:35, ICB). “ ‘If he is the king, he should come down now from the cross. Then we will believe in him’ ” (Matthew 27:42, ERV).

**Read Isaiah 50:4–10. Make a list of the important rules that you see in these verses. How can we show these rules in our own lives? How can you personally do better?**

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**Jesus does not save Himself.**

### THE POEM ABOUT THE SUFFERING SERVANT (Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12)



The heart of Jesus is empty of all pride.

Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12 is known as the poem about the “Suffering Servant.” This poem shows us the nearly impossible job of God: to save people from sin.

Earlier, Isaiah told us about some things that will happen to the Savior. We learned about the special way that He will be born (Isaiah 7:14). We saw that the Savior will be a future son of David (Isaiah 9:6, 7). The Savior will bring Israel back to God and make them strong (Isaiah 11:1–16). The Savior will end the suffering of His people (Isaiah 42:1–7). The Savior will make things right and fair. The Savior must suffer before He gets glory (Isaiah 49:1–12; Isaiah 50:6–10). The poem about the Suffering Servant will show us just how much the Savior will suffer for our sins.

**Read again the verses in the paragraph above. What do they tell us about the Savior, Jesus? How do they help get us ready for what is coming in Isaiah 52 and Isaiah 53?**

Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:1 gets us ready for the poem. These verses tell us that the Servant will be given glory. But first He will suffer so much. His suffering will change the way He looks. People who know Him will not believe it.

Isaiah 53:2, 3 starts with telling us where the Servant comes from. He does not look handsome or beautiful. He looks plain. Soon He will be made very sad. People will turn against Him. Isaiah 53:4–6 explains that the Servant is being punished for us. He accepts our punishment to heal us. Isaiah 53:7–9 tells us that the innocent Servant dies.

In Isaiah 53:10–12, the Servant gets His reward and honor. We learn that He dies because this is part of the plan of God to save sinners.

Compare this poem in Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12 to Philippians 2:5–11. In Philippians 2:5–11, we see that Jesus is God, but He becomes human. His heart is empty of all pride. He chooses to die on a cross. This is the worst way for a person to die at the time Jesus is on the earth. Then God gives Jesus much honor. That is why everyone should accept Jesus as Lord (compare Isaiah 49:7).

**Read Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12. Write down everything this poem says that Jesus has done for us. How important are these things to us?**

**WHO HAS BELIEVED?****(Read again Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12)**

In Isaiah 52:13, the Servant of God is given much honor and glory. But the next verse shows us that the Servant suffers so much that no one who sees His face knows who He is anymore. The New Testament talks about the pain that Jesus suffers. This pain changed the way He looked. Jesus is beaten. He is forced to wear a crown of thorns. He is nailed to a cross. The thing that changes the way He looks the most is our sins. God puts our sins on Jesus. Humans were not made by God to sin. Sin is not natural. That is why our sins made Jesus look no longer human.

Compare this story about Jesus with the story about Job. Job loses all his riches, honor, and power in an instant. Then he sits in ashes on the ground. He scrapes his sores with a piece from a broken pot (Job 1, 2). Job changes so much. His friends do not know who he is when they first see him (Job 2:12). The question is: Why does Job suffer? Why must the Savior suffer? Job does nothing wrong. Jesus does not do anything wrong. Both men are innocent. So, why do they suffer?

**Read again Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12. Write down all the examples from these verses that talk about the innocent person suffering for the people who are guilty. What does this idea teach us?**

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Look at the questions in Isaiah 53:1. We are asked to believe what no one thinks is possible. But the questions also show us that the Lord shows His strength to those people who believe His message (compare with Isaiah 52:10). Do you want to be saved by God? Then believe His message.

**Look carefully at Isaiah 53:6. What is the message for us in this verse? What is this verse saying to you personally? You may have sinned or failed to do the right thing in the past. How does this verse give you hope?**

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The Servant suffers so much that no one who sees His face knows who He is anymore.

## THE HARD TO SAVE (Isaiah 53:3–9)



The followers of Jesus ask Him, “ ‘Was this man born blind because he sinned? Or did his parents sin?’ ” (John 9:2, NlrV).

Some people do not think the Suffering Servant is anyone special. They hate Him (Isaiah 53:2, 3). Isaiah shows us why we should love Him. The Servant is the Child born to us. He is the Prince of Peace. Yes, other people hate Him. But we know who He really is.

Someone said, “We have met the enemy. The enemy is us.” The Servant is not the first person who is hated. He is not the first person to suffer. King David was hated. He suffered when he ran from his son Absalom (2 Samuel 15:30). But the Servant does not do anything to cause His own suffering. His suffering does not come from His own sin. The Servant does not suffer for one person. “The LORD put all our guilt on him” (Isaiah 53:6, ERV). Why did the Servant choose to suffer? Because He loves us. He chose to save the ones who should be destroyed!

But some people do not understand the love of God or the reason for His suffering. They think the Servant suffers because “God was punishing him” (Isaiah 53:4, ICB). In the same way, the friends of Job thought that Job did something evil to cause his own suffering. The followers of Jesus thought the same thing about a blind man. That is why they ask Jesus, “ ‘Was this man born blind because he sinned? Or did his parents sin?’ ” (John 9:2, NlrV). People who saw Jesus on the cross thought the worst about Him. They remembered the words of Moses: “the one who hangs on a tree is cursed by God” (Deuteronomy 21:23, NKJV; compare Numbers 25:4).

Everything that happens to Jesus is part of the plan of God to save sinners. “The law says we are under a curse for not always obeying it. But Christ [Jesus] took away that curse. He changed places with us and put himself under that curse” (Galatians 3:13, ERV). “Christ had no sin, but God made him become sin so that in Christ we could be right with God” (2 Corinthians 5:21, ERV).

“Look at the price God paid for us! Look at the cross. Look at the One who hangs on it. Look at His hands. They are pierced with nails. Look at His feet. They are nailed to the tree. Jesus took our sin in His own body. His suffering and pain are the price God paid to save us.”—Ellen G. White, *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 172, adapted.

**Look at how much it cost God to save us! What does that tell us about His love?**

**AN OFFERING THAT FOREVER CHANGES LIVES  
(Isaiah 53:10–12)**

**How do you understand this verse: the Servant gave Himself “ ‘as an offering for sin’ ” (Isaiah 53:10, ERV)?**

In the Hebrew language, the word “offering” shows us an offering made for sin (Leviticus 5:14 to Leviticus 6:7; Leviticus 7:1–7). A sinner made this offering when he did something wrong to another person (Leviticus 6:2, 3). Isaiah talks about these sins (Isaiah 1–3; Isaiah 10:1, 2; Isaiah 58). Also, the sinner must give back what he stole and some extra. He needed to do this before he made his offering to God and asked for forgiveness (Leviticus 6:4–7; compare Matthew 5:23, 24). What if someone makes the wrong use of something that belongs to God? Then that person must give an offering back to God (Leviticus 5:16). This information helps us to understand Isaiah 40:2. God comforts His people in Babylon. He tells them they have paid enough for their sins. But God needs an offering. Isaiah 53 shows us what the offering will be: the Servant of God—and not an animal. The Servant is led, the same as a sheep to be killed (Isaiah 53:7). He is killed for the people who have turned away from God (Isaiah 53:6).

The Servant “was cut off from this life” (Isaiah 53:8, NIV; compare Daniel 9:26). But He wakes up from the dead. God honors Him. The Servant lives again to see the people He saved (Isaiah 53:10–12).

**Look up the verses below. How does each one show the same message as Isaiah 53?**

**Psalm 32:1, 2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 5:8** \_\_\_\_\_

**Galatians 2:16** \_\_\_\_\_

**Philippians 3:9** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 2:9** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Peter 2:24** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the good news of Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12 all about?**



**The Servant is led, the same as a sheep to be killed (Isaiah 53:7).**



“Jesus won the war  
against sin for us.”  
—Ellen G. White, *Selected  
Messages*, book 1,  
page 302.

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “Jesus took our sins in His own body on the cross. . . . Sin must be very awful if no human or angel can make an offering for it. The curse for sin must be awful, too, if only God can put an end to it. The cross of Jesus shows every person that the punishment for sin is death.”  
—Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling*, page 44, adapted.

“Jesus gave glory and honor to the law of God when He died on the cross. This law is the law of the government of God in heaven. Jesus is the only Son of God. He took the guilt on Himself for the sins of all humans. Everything we need is found only in Jesus: in His coming to this earth as a human and dying for us. He suffered for us because God gave Him strength. He did not have any sin. He was loyal to God in every way. Jesus won the war against sin for us. He took our punishment. He gave us the gift of everlasting life. He did all this when He died. His death gave glory and honor to the law of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 302, adapted.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① Isaiah 53:7–9 shows us the death of the Servant. Then it shows us that His body is laid in a grave above the ground that is carved from stone. In these verses, how many things do you see that happened to Jesus at the end of His life? (For the answer, read Matthew 26:57 to Matthew 27:60; Mark 14:53 to Mark 15:46; Luke 22:54 to Luke 23:53; John 18:12 to John 19:42.)

② Look at the second quotation above from Ellen G. White. She talks about how Jesus gave honor to the law of God when He died. What does she mean by that? How does the death of Jesus show that the law of God continues forever?

**Summary:** Isaiah tells us about the Servant of God. We learn about Him being born. We learn about who He is and what He will do. Then Isaiah shows us an awful experience that will happen to the Servant. This awful experience will give us hope. The Servant chooses to die for our sins. He does this to save and heal sinners.

## EASTER IN KAZAKHSTAN

Sergei Sokol is the top manager at a company that makes and sells bottled drinks. The company is located in the north part of the country of Kazakhstan. During a lunch break, a coworker announces that people should celebrate Easter with some Easter bread, painted eggs, and a drink of vodka. Vodka is a Russian liquor. Many people in Kazakhstan celebrate Easter with vodka, painted eggs, and **kulich**, or Easter bread.

Sergei is happy when his coworker makes this announcement. Now Sergei has a chance to share his faith. Sergei asks his coworker, "What does the Bible say about Easter?"

The coworker does not know. He never read the Bible.

Sergei runs to his office to get his Bible. He and several coworkers search the Bible for the word Easter. They do not find anything that talks about celebrating Easter as a holiday to honor the time when Jesus wakes up from the dead. But Sergei and his coworkers find many places in the Bible that talk about the Jewish Passover. Passover is the time when Jesus made the Jews free from slavery in Egypt. In the Russian language, the Jewish Passover has the same name as Easter: **paskha**. The only food that the Bible says that the Jews eat at **paskha** is roasted lamb or goat with sharp-tasting vegetables and also bread that is not baked with any yeast. Yeast makes bread rise.

"Where are the vodka, painted eggs, and Easter bread in the Bible?" a coworker asks. Sergei smiles. He likes those questions. They lead people to Jesus.

Coworkers do not talk much with Sergei about the Bible when Sergei first joins the company. But Sergei does not hide his faith. He lets his coworkers know that he is a Seventh-day Adventist. His coworkers think his faith is odd. "That guy belongs to a strange religious group," they whisper.

Sergei does not let their words bother him. He wonders how he can share books about Jesus with his coworkers. He starts to give his coworkers books by Ellen G. White as gifts. He gives them *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ*. Coworkers read the books. Then they start asking Sergei questions.

Soon the local Seventh-day Adventist church offers free health classes. Sergei invites his coworkers. Three women come. Sergei gives them a tour of the church. After ten days of health classes, the three women praise Adventists. "We thought you belonged to a strange religious group," one woman says to Sergei at lunch. "But it turns out that this is a real church. And it is a good one too."

Sergei does not feel that he is a special worker for God. He says, "I am not doing anything special. I just love to share Jesus."

## INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



"Where are the vodka, painted eggs, and Easter bread in the Bible?" a coworker asks Sergei.

