

Who Shall Declare His Generation?

“He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

Isaiah 53:8

“In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.”

Acts 8:33

Introduction:

- A. There are many precious clauses and statements in this great prophecy, but we focus on one of them.
- B. Isaiah asked three questions in his long prophecy of Messiah’s death, and this is the third (Is 53:8).
- C. Philip 700 years later was able to explain the passage to the eunuch as applying to Jesus (Acts 8:33).
- D. There is no greater subject than Jesus Christ the Savior of sinners. Examine your heart and priorities.

The Text

- A. Isaiah 53 is one of the longest and most detailed prophecies of Jesus and crucifixion.
- B. Isaiah 53:8 has three parts; we want to differentiate them and isolate on the question.
- C. Part #1 is the first clause: *He was taken from prison and from judgment.*
 - 1. Instead of His trial discovering truth, Jesus was unjustly turned over to crucifixion.
 - 2. This clause states the travesty of justice of Jesus’ trial, sentencing, and execution.
 - 3. Instead of protecting Him to fulfill their offices, Pilate and Herod condemned him.
 - 4. Though faultless before envious enemies, a murderer worthy of death was freed.
 - 5. The priests, who were to rightly apply God’s law, were rabid to cause his death.
 - 6. Though not literally or strictly imprisoned, he was confined for intent of a trial.
 - 7. His grave was not prison nor His death judgment: the first clause is not a victory.
- D. Part #3 is the third clause: *For the transgression of my people was he stricken.*
 - 1. His untimely and unjust torture and death were the means of saving God’s elect.
 - 2. **Stricken.** Struck with a blow. Afflicted with disease or sickness; overwhelmed with trouble or sorrow, and the like. See Is 53:4; 1:5; 16:7; Judges 5:26; Lam 4:9.
 - 3. The blows, pain, torture, and trouble of his last night and day had a definite goal.
 - 4. Jesus died a substitutionary death for His elect people, which is stated well here.
 - 5. His wicked trial and death were not chance or Fate, but His way to cover our sins.
- E. Part #2 is the middle of the verse with two clauses, the second explaining the first.
 - 1. Our attention is focused on the first clause: *and who shall declare his generation?*
 - 2. But it is explained by the second: *for he was cut off out of the land of the living.*
 - 3. The question must be combined with the reason for the question as the middle part.
 - 4. What future or legacy could He have, since He was murdered in the prime of life?
 - 5. The question is to be answered negatively, just like the two that open the chapter.
 - 6. From a natural viewpoint, as the questions in 53:1, Jesus had no family or progeny.

What is a generation here?

- A. Commentators show considerable confusion and variation here with this short clause.
- B. It is not the role of a public crier asking for testimony of his life to prove innocence.

- C. It is not his mother or legal father or their genealogies, for those are known perfectly.
- D. It is not his age or race, for these are known perfectly well by testimony of scripture.
- E. It is not the history of his life and death, for they are both carefully documented for us.
- F. It is not those wicked men living contemporaneously with Jesus in the land of Israel.
- G. It is not his contemporaries failing to account for his death as redemptive for others.
- H. It is not the Origenistic heresy of eternal generation, for that is a blasphemous lie.
- I. It is not the incontrovertibly great mystery of his incarnate sonship, for it is declared.
- J. It is not His glorification and generation as God's firstborn by resurrection from death.
- K. It is not how long he shall live and reign as Christ of God, for his eternity is certain.
- L. His *generation* here is His descendants, seed, children, heirs, progeny, family, etc.
 1. Context must rule, for it determines word definitions; it describes a shortened life.
 2. Jesus was unjustly murdered, cut off in his life's prime, without right judgment.
 3. By natural viewpoint and earthly observation, He was destroyed without posterity.
 4. The question is to be answered negatively, just like the two that open the chapter.
 5. He had no descendants, dynasty, family tree, legacy by His early and terrible death.
 6. His biography, downward genealogy, and His royal seed were cut off by murder.
 7. **Generation.** I. The action of generating. The act or process of generating or begetting physically; procreation; propagation of species. II. That which is generated. Offspring, progeny. Descendants, posterity.
 8. For scriptural usage of *generation* as family or posterity (Psalm 49:13,19; 109:13).

The glory of a generation

- A. Children's children crown old men, but you must have children to have any (Pr 17:6).
- B. Children are a blessing of the Lord and of great value to a man (Ps 127:3-5; 128:3-6).
- C. Consider how God honored Job at the end of his life with generations (Job 42:16-17).
- D. Consider Abram's frustration at God withholding a generation from him (Gen 15:2-3).
- E. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were often promised a numerous seed by God (Gen 15:5).
- F. God built David a house by promising a Son on his throne forever as a huge blessing.
- G. Due to perverse thinking today, the gift of children and a family tree are no big thing.
- H. Conception, birth, and genealogies are major events and things throughout the Bible.
- I. Genealogies extend from father to son from creation all the way to Jesus and then end!

The promise of a generation

- A. God told Abraham he would have a seed like the earth's dust (Ge 13:16; 15:5; 22:17).
- B. In 2000 B.C. Jacob prophesied Shiloh of Judah would gather the people (Gen 49:10).
- C. David foretold his Son would have a serving *seed* as His *generation* (Psalm 22:30-31).
 1. Jesus did not have a normal, natural *generation* of children, but a spiritual family.
 2. You are told by God the Holy Spirit to *account* a spiritual seed for *His generation*.
 3. You should appreciate how the Bible is its own very best commentary (I Cor 2:13).
 4. These children would perpetuate the history of His justification for *righteousness*.
 5. By fathers to children and ministerial succession, the gospel mystery is *declared*.
 6. What a privilege and duty to declare what great things Jesus Christ hath done!

7. What did Jesus do in context? Here is the most graphic picture of His crucifixion!
 8. His generation includes Gentiles – *all the ends of the world* (Ps 22:27). Hallelujah!
 9. His generation includes Gentiles – *all kindreds of the nations* (Ps 22:28). Glory!
 10. For much more about Psalm 22 ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/psalm022.pdf>.
- D. David exhorted the church to forget earthly relations for spiritual ones (Ps 45:16-17).
1. This love song describes Jesus Christ's marriage to the church in great splendor.
 2. There would be numerous spiritual *children* for princes in the earth (Re 1:6; 5:10).
 3. These children are the seed and generation of Jesus Christ in the church (Ep 3:15).
 4. David concluded his matter by promising perpetual memory and praise to Christ.
 5. For much more about Psalm 45 ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/christ/psalm45/sermon.php>.
- E. David foretold God would save and build Zion for His servants' *seed* (Ps 69:35-36).
- F. David prophesied of a generation or seed identified by birth in Jerusalem (Ps 87:1-6).
1. The only Jerusalem that counts is the one in heaven (Gal 4:25-26; Heb 12:22-24).
 2. It describes an Ethiopian born in the city of God – think the eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)!
- G. Isaiah prophesied of a seed of Jesus Christ, which is His generation forever and ever.
1. God would destroy the nation of Israel, but He would reserve a *holy seed* (Is 6:10).
 2. A spiritual fulfillment of *children* for signs and wonders is the church (Is 8:18).
 3. A root of Jesus would be an ensign and rest for Gentile people (Isaiah 11:10-16).
 4. Jesus undergoing the torment of His crucifixion death saw *His seed* (Isaiah 53:10).
- H. Caiaphas, by power of the Holy Ghost, spoke of Jesus' *generation* (John 11:49-52).

The obtaining of a generation

- A. Jesus by death on the cross secured sons and children to Him forever (Heb 2:10-17).
- B. This is our adoption as the sons of God by the Beloved (Ep 1:3-6; Gal 4:4-7; I Jn 3:1).
- C. His generation is mostly Gentiles (Acts 15:13-18; Gal 4:21-31; Rev 5:9-10; 7:9-10).
- D. This family is Abraham's seed and David's house (Gal 3:16,28-29; Acts 15:13-18).
- E. Gentile reader! You are part of the generation of Jesus Christ unseen at the cross then.
- F. Bless God that all three questions (Isaiah 53:1,8) are fulfilled in you very powerfully.

Who shall declare his generation?

- A. The main issue is not to find a person or persons that could, would, or should tell of it.
- B. The real issue is He had no generation for any to tell of, for he was killed without one.
- C. His generation, or seed, was not natural or physical, but rather spiritual and heavenly.
- D. A huge mega-church in heaven is waiting for the rest of His generation to be added.
- E. The family of God includes those on earth along with those in heaven (Eph 3:14-15).
- F. We shall also take care of the lesser issue, for we shall declare His great generation!
- G. As we observe the Lord's Supper, our communion is our unity as one body of Christ.
- H. Let us go from this place to let our lives and lips express our family ties to the Christ.

Conclusion:

- A. Bible reading in Genesis at the beginning of this new year introduced our Creator God Jehovah to us.
- B. But as we read further in His divine library, we learn His Son Jesus Christ and us His beloved seed.
- C. We are the generation, the family or posterity, the brethren or the seed, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. Let us shout and serve with perfect fidelity for the honor of our Lord and Savior, Father and Brother.

For Further Study:

- A. Sermon outline, "Isaiah 53," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/isaiah-53.pdf>.
- B. Sermon outline, "Psalm 22," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/psalm022.pdf>.
- C. Sermon outline, "Psalm 45," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/christ/psalm45/sermon.php>.
- D. Sermon outline, "Mystery of Godliness," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/mystery-of-godliness.pdf>.
- E. Sermon outline, "Sons of God," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/sons-of-god.pdf>.
- F. Sermon outline, "Peculiar People," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/peculiar-redemption.pdf>.
- G. Sermon outline, "Limited Atonement," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/limited-atonement.pdf>.
- H. Sermon outline, "Seed of the Woman," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/christ/seed-of-the-woman/sermon.php>.