

## LENT – “VICARIOUS, VOLUNTARY AND VICTORIOUS” “WHY THE PROVISION MUST DIE”

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Read: Isaiah 53:4-6

Prayer:

*O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: [we thank you for your grace] to all who have gone astray from your ways, and [for] bringing them again with repentant hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>1</sup>*

Our initial study noted how “the rebel must die.” The justice of God demanded that the rebel die. The insurrection was put down. The revolt against God would be stopped and the head of the serpent would be crushed. The serpent’s seed would find its demise in the seed of the woman. This study speaks to God’s answer for the rebel’s offense.

It is always easy to presuppose too much and work from a common assumption that everyone knows the same information and means the same thing when they speak. This however would prove unprofitable. In the Story of God there is a rebellion against His position as God. As a consequence of this rebellion, the perpetrator of the crime must answer for his transgression. The outcome is his death, both immediate and eternal. God, however, makes a way for the debt to be paid. Through promise and picture He offers hope of an offering through whom an eternal atonement can be made. It will be through the shedding of blood that forgiveness for the transgression will be secured. The offering made by God will be vicarious, voluntary and victorious. It will be in place of or in behalf of the rebel and will be offered freely. It will also prove powerful in securing the end for which it is designed. The only necessary action from the rebel is an acceptance of his own inability and of the provision’s full and final sufficiency. It is in this great transaction that life comes from death. It is from this back story that we now consider the question, “Why the provision must die.”

Although the insurrection appears as blight on the Story, it is not without its purpose. The correction to the insurrection enables a powerful contrast to the fulfillment of the rebel’s death. Yet all of this needs necessary footing. The created could never do what can only be done by the Creator. Finiteness will always be limited and inadequate. In their rebellion against God, Adam and Eve offended the infinite. There was nothing they could do to remedy the situation. In an attempt to “save face” they clothed themselves with vegetation. Their effort only exacerbated the situation. It went from bad to worse. If they would be restored to communion with God, then He would have to step in.

The Story of God is permeated with glory and grace. It is inconceivable that the righteous would die for their enemy (Rom. 5:6-10), yet this is exactly what God does in redeeming the rebel. He saves the sinner by becoming the sin-bearer. God promised and pictures the greater truth (Gen. 3:15, 21). Three words will capture this scenario: vicarious, voluntary and

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victorious. These three ideas are in attendance in the Garden of Eden and are present every time redemption is marked.

Isaiah 53 is the great atonement chapter in the Old Testament record. It captures the vicarious, voluntary and victorious elements of the offering. Listen to the weight of the burden carried by the sin-bearer.

<sup>4</sup> “Surely **our griefs** He Himself bore, And **our sorrows** He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, **Smitten** of God, and **afflicted**. <sup>5</sup> But He was **pierced through** for **our transgressions**, He was **crushed** for **our iniquities**; The **chastening** for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His **scourging** we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused **the iniquity of us all To fall on Him**” (Isa. 53:4-6).

Can you not hear the tone and feel the weight? All of our griefs, our sorrows, our transgressions, and our iniquities, all of this and more, were placed on Him. It fell upon Him. He accepted the load, He took it upon Himself and He felt its crushing blow. This He did voluntarily and freely. But let us not be misled. It was not the sin that He found overwhelming. It was not the cumulative weight that He found vast. It was the consequence of sin and the resultant separation from His Father that compelled Him to cry out, “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). This was the shocking blow that bowed His head and bent His knee.

Yet this is the Story written by God before the world’s foundation was poured (Rev. 13:8). God wrote this Story. He did not react, but wrote and wove into the very fabric of the Story the lamb who will vicariously, voluntarily and victoriously secure for Himself a people who will love Him and worship Him forever. It is a Story written in blood and paved by redemption, deliverance and freedom. This is the Story, and this is the wonderment of it all.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bcponline.org/>