

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD! STUDY SEVEN

The Lamb That Was Slaughtered

Isaiah 53:3–7

We no longer come to an altar and sacrifice animals, as happened day after day after day on the Jewish altars. We come to our Savior, who is our Passover, and in Him is forgiveness. In Him alone, there is purpose and reason to go on with our lives. The Christ our Passover has been sacrificed and never needs to be sacrificed again because the work is finished. It is done. Paid for. Paid in full. Completed. The Lamb of God took care of that which had forever plagued humanity.

—Charles R. Swindoll

CAMPAIGNING politicians would never want to be called a “lamb of a leader.” No sports team would vote for a lamb as its mascot. Lambs do not inspire intimidation nor exude strength nor garner much serious attention. While they have fluffy white fur, cuddly little bodies, and cute innocent faces, they offer little to impress us. Instead, most of us would prefer to admire and imitate a lion.

We live in a lion’s world, esteeming lionlike personalities who roar their way to respect and wealth, power and fame. That is why Jesus’ first coming two thousand years ago as the Lamb of God shocked the world as it shocks us today. But why a *lamb*?

Chuck Swindoll answers this question by taking us to the passage in Isaiah that speaks of the One who “was led like a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7). The Father made no mistake sending Jesus as our Lamb. He did so intentionally and from His example, we learn the truth of another oracle from Isaiah:

*“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD.
“And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.
For just as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so my ways are higher than your ways
and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.” (55:8–9)*



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

The text we examine in this study gives us the divine lens to help us understand the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death on the Roman cross. More occurred there than meets the eye. Before we learn of it, however, first pause. Pray that God would prepare you to receive the truth of this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study. Record your prayer below.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah penned his grand work around 700 BC. He prophesied during the reign of four kings of the southern kingdom of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Isaiah saw the downfall of the northern kingdom, Israel, by the sword of Assyria and foresaw the downfall of the southern kingdom by the hammer of Babylon who forced the Israelites into exile.

Exalted, poetic prophecies of the Holy One of Israel thread through the book of Isaiah—including warnings, encouragement, and promises of the coming Davidic King, the Jewish Messiah. It is no wonder that the New Testament writers quoted Isaiah more than any other Old Testament book.



Observation: God's Lamb on Earth

Isaiah 53 contains a messianic prophecy known as *The Suffering Servant*. Using your observation techniques, read *Isaiah 53:3–7*.



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How did the “we” of the passage behave toward the man of whom Isaiah spoke (Isaiah 53:3)?

It's a picture of shunning. They had nothing to do with Him. They discounted His importance. They hid their face from Him. You do that when you are shunning another individual. You turn away from him or her. You discount the person's presence, his or her life. You do not esteem the individual. —Chuck Swindoll

How did the “we” of the passage perceive God's action toward the despised one (53:4)?

What was the accurate perception of the servant's suffering (53:5)?



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Isaiah used the imagery of sheep with two references in this passage (Isaiah 53:6–7). Who were the references, and how were each like a sheep?

Isaiah loaded each phrase with a mountain of meaning that leaves us as surprised and astounded at God's redemption plan as those bystanders who saw it unfold before their eyes outside the gates of Jerusalem.



Interpretation: God's Lamb in Our Place

At the heart of this passage, we find the core of the gospel message: Christ died in our place. It's called *substitutionary atonement*. God forgave our sin and removed our guilt by making Jesus “who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf” (2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB). As our guilt offering, Jesus “bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds [we] were healed” (1 Peter 2:24 NASB). God gave Jesus, who lived perfectly, what He didn't deserve (judgment) to give us, who live sinfully, what we don't deserve (forgiveness). *How remarkable!*

We use the word *atonement* to capture a biblical concept. So, using a Bible dictionary or commentary on this passage, record below how atonement relates to Old Testament sacrifices and the idea of a substitute.



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Next, look up *lamb* in your Bible dictionary. What significant imagery does a lamb carry throughout the Bible?

According to Isaiah 53:7, how then was the Suffering Servant like a lamb? Why did Isaiah use this imagery?

Isaiah 53:4–6 captures the substitutionary nature of the Suffering Servant. Read each verse carefully and explain how each of the three verses portrays the Servant as our substitute. Why was there a need for a substitute? What was the outcome for each party in the act of substitution?

No other death would pay our debt to God. No other lamb would be qualified, for all the others are spotted and blemished. Jesus is the spotless Lamb. Scripture makes that clear in three statements: He knew no sin, had no sin, and did no sin. The spotless Lamb of God took our place. —Chuck Swindoll



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Correlation: The Lamb Who Conquered

As you probably read in your research for interpretation, a lamb functions as a key theme from Genesis through Revelation. Below, read a few passages of Scripture and summarize how each further develops the concept of the Lamb of God in the biblical canon.

Exodus 12:1–14

1 Corinthians 5:6–8

Revelation 5



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Isaiah 53:3–7

Revelation 19:6–9

The divine portrait of God's Lamb fills us not only with awe but with hope as we look forward to the day when we will partake in the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let's end correlation with one more passage—the words of Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, who eloquently captured the significance of the Lamb of God.

For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake. Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory. You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.

(1 Peter 1:18–22)



Application: Lamblike Qualities Worth Emulating

God does not call His children to strut and push, roar and claw like the lion-obsessed world we live in. Instead, He calls us to imitate the Lamb of God. For this reason, Chuck emphasizes four character traits to help us walk by the power of God, emulating a lamb instead of a power-hungry lion.

- 1) *A life of dependence.* Lambs understand their vulnerability. Likewise, we must acknowledge the truth that we depend upon God to take care of us and cultivate in us hearts that trust Him.
- 2) *The assurance of approachability.* You can pet a lamb, pick up a lamb, play with a lamb. Not so with a lion! God's children not only interact with the world but live with a level of approachability, so people see that we are not lions that will harm them if they approach us.
- 3) *A heart of innocence.* We carry no duplicity, sly agendas, or friendly involvement with the impurities of the world. Wise and discerning regarding evil? Yes. But innocent as lambs.



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- 4) *The spirit of sacrifice.* In ancient Israel, lambs existed to be sacrificed. The Lamb of God came to give His life as a sacrifice. We walk in the same steps of sacrificial obedience that this old world might taste new life.

Reflect now on your ways in this lion-filled world. Do you find it easy to live like a lamb, or do you walk too comfortably with the paws of a lion? After considering your life and the four lamblike traits above, record below how you can better embrace these qualities and imitate the Lamb of God.

In startling fashion and with undeniable clarity, Isaiah 53 has taught us the true meaning of God's statement—that His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts different from our thoughts. Like we read in Revelation 5, how might the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David conquer? By becoming the Lamb who was slain.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You that Your Son, the Lamb of God, is also my Shepherd who guides me because I am so prone to wander. Thank You for laying my iniquities on Him because I could have never paid the debt of my sin. I glorify the name of Jesus and live for Him alone. Amen.



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STUDY SEVEN

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY

The Lamb That Was Slaughtered

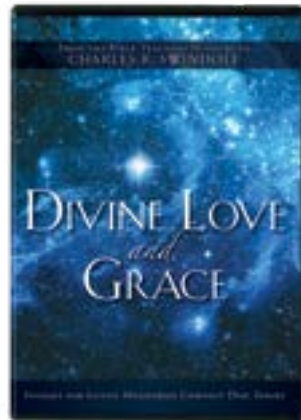
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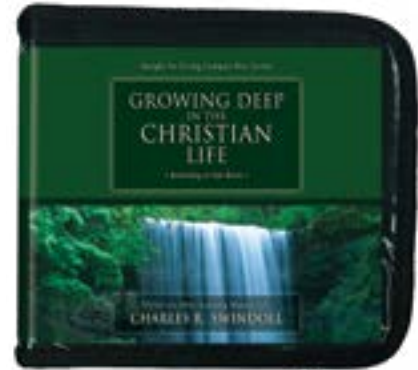
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For the 2019 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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