

Despised by the world

Who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

²He grew up before him like a tender shoot,

and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,

nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³He was despised and rejected by mankind,

a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces

he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

The suffering servant was, v1, the 'arm of the Lord' – God's powerful intervention in this world in order to achieve reconciliation between God and humanity by dealing with our sin.

But who can believe that a weak, crucified carpenter's son from 'nowhere' Nazareth (v2) could possibly be God's solution to our deepest human need?

How could someone whom so many despise and reject, especially among the powerful elite (52:15), really be God's Messiah, the Saviour of the world?

Yet this was God's way, his plan. John 12:37-38 says: "Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfil the word of Isaiah the prophet: 'Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?'"

Think: Where are we most likely to despise the weakness of Christ? Do we try to paint the Christian life in a 'rose-tinted' version to make Jesus more appealing to others? Why do we think we need to do this? Why did God choose to have his Saviour be a servant who was despised and rejected by a world that values human 'impressiveness'? (See 1 Cor 1:18 for further thought)

Prayer: Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, that you entered into this world of suffering, that you are familiar with our pains. I can trust that you walk with me today and know the burdens I bear. Please help me to continue to trust that you can use me in my weakness.

Please help me to not despise that your gospel message appears so foolish to the world, but to continue to trust that it is your power for salvation and so to share Christ and live like Him today, whatever others make of me.

