

Isaiah, a *descendant of Abraham*, was *called from the womb* to be God's prophet. His words are like a "sharp sword" and a "polished arrow." (v 2) But Isaiah would be the first to admit "*I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity.*" (v 4) Who bothered to listen to him?

I suspect Isaiah experienced all the disappointment and disillusionment just about every prophet, priest and pastor experiences. All that work, all that preaching, and teaching, all that pastoral care given to so many people over an entire lifetime with such little evident fruit.

Isaiah's book is perhaps the greatest in the Old Testament. It speaks of both the wrath and the grace of God. It's beautifully, powerfully and persuasively written. Yet how effective was Isaiah's work? He tells us in verse 7. He was "*deeply despised and abhorred by the nation.*" Despite all Isaiah's efforts, the people of Israel didn't repent, and went into exile. And neither did the people of Judah. Nearly all of them were unfaithful.

There's just *one possibility* left for who this Savior can be that Isaiah speaks of. There's just *one person* who checks all the boxes. And that's *Jesus Christ*. Like Israel, like Isaiah, Jesus was *called from the womb*. Like Isaiah's words, the words of Jesus are like a "sharp sword" and "a polished arrow."

And there are other similarities to Isaiah. Both Isaiah and Jesus were *honored in the eyes of the LORD*, but *despised and abhorred by the nation*. As Isaiah looked at his own ministry, he thought himself a failure. But *how successful was Jesus* after three and half years of labor? Of his twelve disciples, *Judas betrayed him, Peter denied him, and all but John ran away*. By Good Friday, Jesus had a grand total of one faithful disciple.

Isaiah didn't live to see the success of his work. Jesus did. Despised, abhorred and crucified, Jesus *rose to live again*, victorious from the grave. Not long after, some of the very people who rejected Jesus became Christians. St. Paul was perhaps the most famous example.

Isaiah prophesied, "*Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves . . .*" (v 7b) Do you know who the first Christian king was? Tiridates III, king of Armenia. He was originally a fierce persecutor of Christians, but in 303 AD he became a Christian and was baptized by St.