

## **SERMON: THE ROOT WAS NOT DESTROYED**

### **Isaiah 53: 1-2a**

**(1) Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? (2) For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground.**

### **Introduction**

This Scripture brings back one of my fondest childhood memories. It brings back memories of Aunt Shug and Uncle Bud. Aunt Shug was my grandfather's sister; Uncle Bud was her husband. There was a small grove of China berry trees on their property. These trees made beautiful blossoms, but at certain times of the year they produced an obnoxious odor-I mean obnoxious.

The berries were inedible and were used by the boys in the community to make ammunition for pop guns. Each berry was mostly a big single seed with very little flesh. Uncle Bud and my paternal grandfather, Walter Ward, taught us how to make pop guns. In that era, you made most of your toys. It was a simple device. You would take a piece of bamboo, about eighteen inches long, from a discarded fishing pole and hollow it out just slightly larger than the average China berry. Then you would find a straight stick that could propel a berry placed in the bamboo. When the stick, which had to be whittled to the right size, was thrust through the bamboo, forcing out the berry, it made a loud popping sound which could be heard far away. If you could not find the right stick, you made it into a blow gun.

Now let's get back to Aunt Shug. She wanted the trees cut down because when it was her turn to have the pastor over for Sunday dinner, the trees were not in full bloom, but rather they were in "full stink mode." To her this was totally embarrassing. Having the pastor for Sunday dinner on pastoral Sundays was a big deal. The incident was very similar to the wedding in Cana in which they had run out of wine. Uncle Bud complied with his wife's adamant wishes and made cutting down the trees a community project. About a dozen men from the community came to assist with the project. It was not only a work project, but also a social event. Aunt Shug and Uncle Bud were up in age, so Uncle Bud needed a lot of help. Upon completion of the task, everyone left with a sense of accomplishment. Aunt Shug's wish-or should I say demand- had been duly granted.

About two weeks later, to everyone's amazement, numerous sprouts began to bulge up from the earth where the trees had been. They were growing at an astronomical pace. They had reached a height of three feet. They were immediately cut down with a sling blade. Over and over, they were cut down and grew again. The county farm agent and the Ag teacher were brought in. They said we need to dig up the roots entirely or kill the roots with chemicals. Of course, that made sense. Most of the men had already figured that out. Efforts to dig up the roots still left portions of the roots intact. The root systems were very deep and spread into so many different places. The county farm agent

brought some chemicals and applied them to the soil. The chemical concoction did not work. He said anything stronger would pollute the water table and contaminate the drinking water from the pump. It became a test of wills and the China berry trees won. When I left for college, the trees were still winning because the roots could not be destroyed.

In our text, Jesus is pictured as a tender shoot or stem growing from a root in dry ground. He sprouts up because the evil one was not able to kill the root. Either a drought had caused the trunk and the leaves to fade away or someone had down cut down the tree for fire wood. Sometimes in war, the invading army would cut down trees to make battering rams or to disrupt the food supply of their enemies. A tree with only the root left, in dry ground-that's the worst of conditions.

### **Exposition**

**1. The Connection To The Proto-Evangelium Was Not Destroyed. Through The Seed of a Woman, the Works of satan Would Be Defeated.  
(Genesis 3:15)**

**2. The Connection To The Abrahamic Covenant Was Not Destroyed. Through Abraham's Descendants All Nations Would Be Blessed. Jesus Is Abraham's Pre-Eminent Descendant-In the Flesh.  
(Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17:1-7)**

**3. The Connection Linked Jeremiah's Balm in Gilead To The Old Rugged Cross and The Blood Of Jesus. The Cross Was the New Testament's Balm Tree. The Blood Of Jesus Is The New Testament's Healing Balm (Salve).  
(Jeremiah 8:22; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:7)**

**4. The Connection Between The Easter Sunday Morning And Good Friday was Not Destroyed. Jesus Rose on the Third Day with All Power in His Hands.**

### **Closing Thoughts**

The roots of plants provide stability and extract nutrients from the soil. Some roots also store food for tough times. Let's make sure we are rooted and grounded in the Lord and His Word. By the Way, you know roots are below the surface. We don't see them,

but they are most important. Some of the most important things in a Christian's life are not seen by others. Only God sees them. Give God Glory. Give God all the Glory!

### **Related Scripture**

#### **Isaiah 53:1-12**

### **End Notes**

1. Our roots were not destroyed. Pop guns and blow guns are holdovers from our African culture. In our hands they were toys, but during the eras when Blacks were not allowed to own fire arms, they were used as a means to secure food. In the hands of a skilled hunter, small game, such as rabbits and squirrels, could be harvested with a pop gun or blow gun.

2. Our roots were not destroyed. Slaves were not allowed to own or make African drums. The slave holders were afraid drums would be used not just for music, but also for communications to plan uprisings. They were allowed in the Caribbean because the ocean was a significant barrier to travel. Without drums we still maintained our love for rhythm. In church, we stomped our feet, clapped our hands, and swayed from side to side to get into and stay in a "holy groove."

3. Our roots were not destroyed. Slaves were not allowed to legally marry. Remembering the strong marital ties of their African culture, they performed secret ceremonies in which they jumped a broom simultaneously, implying they were husband and wife in the sight of God and their fellow slaves. A straw from that broom, worn constantly in the hair of both the husband and the wife, was equivalent to wedding rings. The slave masters thought they were used as a type of tooth pick or just some silly thing the slaves were doing.

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