

ISAIAH 53 | Suffering Servant

My Servant Shall Sprinkle Many Nations

13 Behold, my Servant [Messiah] shall act wisely (ישְׁפִיל). He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. 14 As many were astonished (שָׁמַם) at you (masc. sing.)— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of Adam (בָּנִים)— 15 so shall he sprinkle (נָתַת) many nations (גּוֹיִם רַבִּים). Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand (בֵּין).

Despised and Abandoned by Men

1 Who has believed (אָמַן) what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed (גָּלוּה)? 2 For he [the Servant] grew up before him [Yahweh] like a young plant (יִזְקַח), and like a root (שָׂעֵץ) out of dry ground. He had no form (אֲרָךְ) or splendour (כָּבֵד) that we should look at him, and no appearance (מְרָאָה) that we should desire/take pleasure in/treasure (חָנַךְ) him. 3 He was despised (בָּזָה) and abandoned (לְבָזָבָה) by men, a man of full of pain (אַיִלָּה מְאֻכּוֹת) who knows sickness/suffering (חַלְלָה). And as one from whom men veil their faces (מְסֻתָּר) he was despised (בָּזָה), and we did not respect (חָשַׁב) him.

With His Wounds We Are Healed

4 Surely he has borne (נָשָׂא) our sickness/suffering (חַלְלָה) and carried (סִבְלָה) our pains/aches (מְאֻכּוֹת). Yet we assumed/took (חָשַׁבָּה) him afflicted (נָגַע), stricken (נִכְהָה) by God, and humiliated (עָנָה). 5 But he was wounded (חָלַל) for our transgressions. He was crushed (דָּכַא) for our iniquities. Upon him was the discipline (מִזְבֵּחַ) that brought us shalom (שְׁלֹום), and with his wound/slash (חַבּוּרָה) we were healed (רָפָא). 6 All we like sheep have wandered astray (תָּעוּה). We have turned—every one—to his own way. But Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all.¹

He Opened Not His Mouth

7 He was oppressed (נָגַע), and he was humiliated (עָנָה), yet he opened not his mouth. Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter (חַבּוּצָה), and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression (עָצָר) and judgment (טִבְעָה) he was taken away. And as for his generation (דוֹר), who considered/meditated (חִשְׁבָּה) that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked (עַשְׂרָה) and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence/wrong (סַעַרְתָּה), and there was no trickery/fraud (מְרַמָּתָה) in his mouth.

¹ 2 Co 5:21 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Many Accounted Righteous

10 Yet Yahweh desired to/took pleasure in/delighted to (חָפַץ) crush (דָּכָא) him. He has made him sick (חָלָה). When his soul (שְׁנִי) makes an atonement/compensation (שְׁמִיאָה) for guilt, he shall see his descent (עַמֵּךְ). He shall prolong his days. The joy/delight/wish/matter/business (צָבָא) of Yahweh shall succeed (צָלָה) in his hand. 11 Out of the anxious trouble (לֹאֲנָזֶן) of his soul (שְׁנִי) he shall see and be satisfied (שָׁבַע). By his sweat (רַקְעָתָה) shall the Righteous one, my Servant (צַדִּיק עַבְדִּי), make many to be accounted righteous (צָדִיקָה),² and he shall carry (סְבִּיל) their sin-guilt (פַּעַם). 12 Therefore I will divide him (חָלֵק) a portion with the many (רַבִּים), and he shall divide the booty/spoil/plundered goods (לִלְלָה) with the mighty (עֲנָזִים), because he poured out (עָרָה) his soul (שְׁנִי) to death (מוֹתָה) and was counted among (מִנְהָה) the criminals (עֲוָנִים). Yet he bore/suffered (נִשְׂאָה) the sin-guilt (אַתְּהָה) of many and interceded (פָּגָע)³ for the criminals (פְּשָׁעָה).

² “[T]o assist someone towards his rights” (*HALOT*, 1004).

³ **Is 59:16** 16 He saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no one to intercede (פָּגָע). Then his own arm brought him salvation (עַשְׂיוֹן), and his righteousness (הַצְדָּקָה) upheld him.

Commentary

1. Isaiah 53.

a. Subject.

- (1) “Isaiah 53 is the central prophetic text in the debate concerning Jesus the Messiah. ...[T]he so-called ‘big three,’ Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Radak (writing in the eleventh and twelfth centuries) all interpreted Isaiah 53a with reference to the nation of Israel as a whole, or, more particularly, the righteous within the nation.”⁴
- (2) The rabbinic interpretation is that the Gentiles finally understand why Israel suffered and how righteous and beloved Israel is.⁵
- (3) Talmud.
 - (a) “The Messiah—what is his name? ...The Rabbis say, The Leper Scholar, as it is said, ‘surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God and afflicted....’”⁶
 - (b) “Another explanation [of Ruth ii.14]: —He is speaking of king Messiah; ‘Come hither,’ draw near to the throne; ‘and eat of the bread,’ that is, the bread of the kingdom; ‘and dip thy morsel in the vinegar,’ this refers to his chastisements, as it is said, ‘But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.’”⁷
- (4) Modern Judaism.
 - (a) The modern Jewish interpretation is that the servant of Yahweh is the nation of Israel herself.
 - (5) “[T]here are numerous example of the text being interpreted messianically in rabbinic literature—especially the exalted picture of 52:13....”⁸
 - (6) “Significantly, the references to the servant as a people actually end with 48:20 while the references to the servant as an individual come into indisputable focus beginning with chapter 49 and continuing through the end of chapter 53. Thus, by the time we reach Isaiah 52:13, the spotlight is on a person, not a people.”⁹
 - (7) “The only legitimate, exegetically consistent interpretation of Isaiah 53:8 is the servant of the Lord suffered for the people of Israel, not that the servant actually was the people of Israel. ...Israel’s sufferings in exile did not bring healing to the nations....”¹⁰
 - (8) The rabbinic interpretation is that Israel bore the consequences of the sin of the Gentiles.¹¹
 - (9) Jesus interpreted this chapter as applying to himself.

⁴ Michael Brown, “Jewish Interpretations of Isaiah 53.”

⁵ Michael Brown, “Jewish Interpretations of Isaiah 53.”

⁶ Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 98b.

⁷ *Midrash Ruth Rabbah*.

⁸ Michael Brown, “Jewish Interpretations of Isaiah 53.”

⁹ Michael Brown, “Jewish Interpretations of Isaiah 53.”

¹⁰ Michael Brown, “Jewish Interpretations of Isaiah 53.”

¹¹ Michael Brown, “Jewish Interpretations of Isaiah 53.”

- (a) **Mk 9:11-12** 11 And [Peter, James, and John] asked [Jesus], Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come? 12 And he said to them, Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?
 - (b) **Lk 22:37** 37 For I [Jesus] tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: And he was numbered with the transgressors. For what is written about me has its fulfillment.
- (10) The early church was absolutely convinced Is 53 spoke of Jesus.
- (a) **Ac 8:30-35** 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, Do you understand what you are reading? 31 And he said, How can I, unless someone guides me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth. 34 And the eunuch said to Philip, About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.
- 1) Notice the eunuch understood the servant to be an individual, not the nation of Israel.
- b. Message.
- (1) Five criteria seem central to the idea of vicarious suffering in Isaiah 53: (1) one person intercedes for the sins of others; (2) the one who intercedes for the sins of others is himself sinless and righteous; (3) the vicarious act of the one occurs once for all; (4) one intercedes for the sins of others of his own will; and (5) God brings about the vicarious action of the one for the sins of the others intentionally.¹²
 - (2) The main point is that the Servant's suffering will lead to exaltation and glory. True, the suffering is important, but his glory is equally important, for it will show that the Servant carried out the desire of God voluntarily.¹³
- c. Structure.
- (1) There are five stanzas.
 - (2) Burnt offering (Is 52:13-15), meal offering (Is 53:1-3), peace offering (Is 53:4-6), sin offering (Is 53:7-9), and trespass offering (Is 53:10-12).¹⁴
- d. Progressive Revelation.
- (1) Ge 3.
 - (2) Ge 22.
 - (3) Joseph.
 - (4) Substitution was not a new thought to Israel. It was enshrined in the Torah of Moses.
 - (5) Ps 22.

¹² Hermann Spieckermann, in Janowski and Stulmacher, *Suffering Servant*, 5-7.

¹³ John A. Martin, "[Isaiah](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1106.

¹⁴ Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Thomas Nelson, 1983), 1:192.

- (6) **Is 1:18** 18 Come now, let us reason together, says Yahweh. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
- (a) Isaiah has announced forgiveness, but the basis on which it rests has not been clarified. Now at last it is.¹⁵
- (7) This is the last of Isaiah's four Servant songs.
- (a) **Is 42:1-4** 1 Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench. He will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for his Torah.
- (b) **Is 49:1-6** 1 Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. Yahweh called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword. In the shadow of his hand he hid me. He made me a polished arrow. In his quiver he hid me away. 3 And he said to me, You are my Servant, [the new] Israel, in whom I will be glorified. 4 But I said, I have laboured in vain. I have spent my strength for nothing and emptiness. Yet surely my right is with Yahweh, and my recompense with my God. 5 And now Yahweh says, he who formed me from the womb to be his Servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of Yahweh, and my God has become my strength— 6 he says: It is too light a thing that you should be my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel. I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.
- (c) **Is 50:4-7** 4 The Lord Yahweh has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens. He awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. 5 Lord Yahweh has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious. I turned not backward. 6 I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard. I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. 7 But Lord Yahweh helps me, therefore I have not been disgraced. Therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.
- (d) Is 52:13-53:12 (see above).
- (8) We could add a fifth.
- (a) **Is 61:1-3** 1 The Spirit of Yahweh God is upon me [the Servant], because Yahweh has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, 2 to proclaim the year of Yahweh's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead

¹⁵ Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 209.

of a faint spirit, that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of Yahweh, that he may be glorified.

(9) **Da 9:26** 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing.

e. Importance/Significance.

(1) **1 Co 15:3-4** 3 For I [Paul] delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Messiah died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures....

f. Sublimity.

(1) This song is the crown jewel of Isaiah's theology, the focal point of his vision. The Servant is the key to it all. The Servant never says a word. It is others who testify of him.¹⁶

(2) "Many, many facets of the Servant's character are revealed in this Song. He is sage, priest, sacrifice, servant, sufferer, conqueror and intercessor. He is the channel of God's mercy to sinners. In him the holiness and mercy of God are perfectly reconciled. He is the key to all God's plans for his people and for the world. And Isaiah's portrait of him is almost complete. Only one Song remains, in 61:1-3. Then, when all the relevant data are in, we will see the whole in the light of the New Testament."¹⁷

(3) "How many are there whose eyes have been opened when reading this 'golden passionnal of the Old Testament evangelist,' as Polycarp the Lysian calls it! In how many an Israelite has it melted the crust of his heart! It looks as if it had been written beneath the cross upon Golgotha, and was illuminated by the heavenly brightness of the full שֶׁבֶת יְמִינִי. It is the unravelling of Ps. 22 and Ps. 110. It forms the outer centre of this wonderful book of consolation (Isa. 40-66), and is the most central, the deepest, and the loftiest thing that the Old Testament prophecy, outstripping itself, has ever achieved."¹⁸

2. My Servant Shall Sprinkle Many Nations (Is 52:13-15).

a. **Is 52:13-15** 13 Behold, my Servant [Messiah] will achieve success (שָׁכֵל). He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. 14 As many were astonished (תָּמַשׁ) at you (masc. sing.)— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of Adam (בְּנֵי אָדָם)— 15 so shall he sprinkle (נִזְחָם) many nations (גּוֹיִם רֹבָם). Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand (בִּין).

b. Israel is again to behold Yahweh's servant, Messiah (v. 13a).

(1) **Is 42:1** 1 Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations.

(2) The first and last of Isaiah's Servant songs begin the same way.

c. Yahweh's Servant will wisely achieve success (שָׁכֵל) (v. 13b).

¹⁶ Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 209.

¹⁷ Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 214.

¹⁸ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 7:499-500.

- (1) He wisely knows exactly what to do to bring about God's intended result.
- (2) **Jos 1:7-8** 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the Torah that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success (**שָׁכֶל**) wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success (**שָׁכֶל**).
- (3) **1 Sa 18:5** 5 And David went out and was successful (**שָׁכֶל**) wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.
- (4) **1 Sa 18:14-15** 14 And David had success (**שָׁכֶל**) in all his undertakings, for Yahweh was with him. 15 And when Saul saw that [David] had great success (**שָׁכֶל**), he stood in fearful awe of him.
- (5) **1 Ki 2:3** 3 ...And keep the charge of Yahweh your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, that you may prosper (**שָׁכֶל**) in all that you do and wherever you turn....
- (6) **2 Ki 18:7** 7 And Yahweh was with him. Wherever he went out, he prospered (**שָׁכֶל**). He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him.
- d. The result of his success is that he will be high, lifted up, and exalted (v. 13b).
 - (1) This corresponds to Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and exaltation to the Father's right hand.
 - (a) **Php 2:9-11** 9 Therefore God has highly exalted [Jesus] and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 - (b) **He 1:3-4** 3 After making purification for sins, [Jesus] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high....
 - (c) See *Jesus' Ascension*.
 - e. Many shudder/are disgusted/experience revulsion/are astonished (**מִנְשָׁחַ**) at him because his appearance is so inhumanly deformed/disfigured (**מִתְפַּעַט**) (v. 14).
 - (1) "Many" is a key concept in this song (52:14-15; 53:11-12). It is a theological term for the whole company of those who benefit from the Servant's acts.¹⁹
 - f. But in this way the Servant will sprinkle/spatter (**גַּזֵּן**) many nations (v. 15a).
 - (1) Sprinkling has to do with cleansing, with making a person or thing fit to be in the presence of God.²⁰
 - (2) **Le 4:6** 6 ...And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle part of the blood seven times before Yahweh in front of the veil of the sanctuary.
 - (3) **Le 8:11** 11 And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar, all its utensils, the basin, and its stand, to consecrate them.

¹⁹ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 424.

²⁰ Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 210.

- (4) **Le 14:7** 7 And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease. Then he shall pronounce him clean and shall let the living bird go into the open field.
- (5) **He 9:13-14** 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the *sprinkling* of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.
- (6) **He 10:22** 22 ...Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts *sprinkled* clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
- (7) **He 12:24** 24 ...And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the *sprinkled* blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
- (8) **1 Pe 1:1-2** 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Messiah, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Messiah and for *sprinkling* with his blood. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.
- (9) The Servant is both priest (52:15) and sacrifice (53:10). It is through the Servant's priestly work that God's people are themselves made fit for their priestly work.²¹
- g. The reaction to his success will be kings (**מֶלֶךְ**) shutting their mouths in awe as they see and understand what they previously not known about (v. 15b).
- (1) **Is 49:7** 7 Thus says Yahweh, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised [Messiah], abhorred by the nation [of Israel], the Servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of Yahweh, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.
- (2) **Mk 15:39** 39 And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God!
- (3) **Ro 15:20-21** 20 ...And thus I [Paul] make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Messiah has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, 21 but as it is written, Those who have never been told of him [Jesus] will see, and those who have never heard will understand.

3. Despised and Abandoned by Men (Is 53:1-3).

- a. **Is 53:1-3** 1 Who has believed (**נָאַת**) what he has heard from us [prophets]? And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed (**גָּלוֹת**)? 2 For he [the Servant] grew up before him [Yahweh] like a young plant (**יִזְקֵךְ**), and like a root (**שָׁעַר**) out of dry ground. He had no form (**פְּנִים**) or splendour (**כָּבוֹד**) that we should look at him, and no appearance (**חָנָן**) that we should desire/take pleasure in/treasure (**חַمְדָה**) him. 3 He was despised (**בָּזָה**) and abandoned (**בָּזָל**) by men, a man of full of pain (**מְאֻבָּד**) who knows sickness/suffering (**לִלְלָה**). And as one from whom men veil their faces (**מְסִתָּה**) he was despised (**בָּזָה**), and we did not respect (**חָשַׁבָּה**) him.
- b. The key question is: who will believe in the report about the suffering Servant (v. 1a)?

²¹ Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 209.

- (1) “Us” (v. 1a) refers to Isaiah and other prophets and apostles who have been prophesying, or will prophesy about this Servant.
 - (a) **Ro 10:16-17** 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us? 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the message of Messiah.
- (2) With blind eyes and hardened heart, it is impossible for us to believe.
 - (a) **Jn 12:36-41** 36 When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from [the Jewish leaders]. 37 Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, 38 so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, 40 He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them. 41 Isaiah said these things because he saw [Jesus’] glory and spoke of him.
- (3) Every person must make a choice about the Servant Isaiah is describing.
- c. The action of Yahweh is revealed in what the Servant does (v. 1b).
 - (1) Implied is that not everyone will believe (v. 1a). Not everyone will have positive volition such that the Spirit will reveal (v. 1b) to him or her the significance of the Servant’s person and work.
 - (2) Sadly, it is easy for man to badly miscalculate the importance of Jesus. In fact no one can believe without prior divine revelation. On the basis of human observation alone, there is no discernment as to who the Servant really is.
“Nothing but divine revelation can make the Servant known to us and draw us to him.”²²
- d. The Servant grows up before Yahweh like young plant or root out of dry ground (v. 2a).
 - (1) **Is 11:1** 1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall produce fruit.
 - (2) Jesus came from a spiritually dry area, Galilee, where one would not expect the Messiah to come from.
- e. The Servant has no special appearance to attract our attention (v. 2b).
 - (1) Isaiah includes himself by using “we.”
 - (2) There was nothing distinctive about Jesus’ appearance at his first coming. He was the kind of individual people do not normally want to look at. He was not well-built, impressive, or handsome. He was ordinary and unattractive.
 - (3) **Mt 13:55** 55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas
 - (4) **Php 2:7-8** 7 ...But emptied himself, by taking the form of a Servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death....
- f. Men despised, abandoned, and isolated (v. 3a).

²² J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 427, 29.

- (1) **Ps 22:6-7** 6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by humanity and despised by the people (מִצְרָיִם) [of Israel]. 7 All who see me mock me. They make mouths at me. They wag their heads.
- (2) **Mk 9:12** 12 And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?
- (3) **Mk 15:16-20** 16 And the soldiers led [Jesus] away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. 18 And they began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! 19 And they were striking his head with a reed, spitting on him, and kneeling down in homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.
- (4) **Mk 15:29-32** 29 And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, 30 save yourself, and come down from the cross! 31 So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another saying, He saved others. He cannot save himself. 32 Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe. Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.
- g. He was a man full of pain, well-acquainted with suffering/sickness (v. 3b).
 - (1) This refers not to his own constitution, but his taking on the pains and sickness of others.²³
- h. He was despised and considered unimportant (v. 3c).
 - (1) **Jn 1:10-11** 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people [Israel] did not receive him.

4. With His Wounds We Are Healed (Is 53:4-6).

- a. **Is 53:4-6** 4 Surely he has borne (נשָׂא) our sickness/suffering (בַּקְשֵׁר) and carried our pains/aches (צְאָבָד). Yet we assumed/took him as (שָׁבַח) afflicted (עֲגַל), stricken (נִכְהָ) by God, and humiliated (עָנָה). 5 But he was wounded (חָלַל) for our crimes (פָּשָׁע). He was crushed (דָּכָא) for our sin-guilt (זָנוֹן). Upon him was the discipline (מוֹסֵר) that brought us shalom (שָׁלוֹם), and with his wound/slash (חַבְירָה) we were healed (רָפָא). 6 All we like sheep have wandered astray (תָּעוֹתָה). We have turned—every one—to his own way. But Yahweh has laid on him the sin-guilt (זָנוֹן) of us all.
- b. The Servant alone shoulders our suffering, sickness, and pain (v. 4a).
 - (1) There was no cooperation or understanding from us.
 - (2) **Mt 8:16-17** 16 That evening they brought to [Jesus] many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.
 - (3) Though Jesus does heal physical ailments today (though not all of them), his greater work is healing souls, giving salvation from sin.²⁴

²³ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 428.

²⁴ John A. Martin, “[Isaiah](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1107.

- c. We assumed he was afflicted, stricken by God, and humiliated (v. 4b).
 - (1) **Mk 15:16-20** 16 And the soldiers led [Jesus] away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. 18 And they began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! 19 And they were striking his head with a reed, spitting on him, and kneeling down in homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.
- d. But he was:
 - (1) Pierced for our crimes (v. 5a).
 - (a) **Ro 4:22-25** 22 That is why his faith was counted to [Abraham] as righteousness. 23 But the words it was counted to him were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
 - (2) Crushed/trampled to death for our sin-guilt (v. 5b).
 - (a) This is describing penal substitutionary atonement. See *Atonement*.
 - (b) **Php 2:8** 8 And being found in human form, [Jesus] humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 - (3) Disciplined to bring us shalom (v. 5c).
 - (a) פָּלִימָנָה means to be whole or complete. It's a rounded wholeness comprising personal fulfilment, harmonious society, and a secure relationship with God.²⁵
 - (b) **1 Pe 3:18** 18 For Messiah also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God....
 - (4) Slashed to bring us healing (v. 5d).
 - (a) The Servant deals with every aspect of our need, our sinful state, our alienation from God, and our broken personhood. It is healing in a total sense, restoring fulness and completeness.²⁶
 - (b) **Is 30:26** 26 ...The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when Yahweh binds up the brokenness of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.
 - (c) **1 Pe 2:24** 24 [Jesus] himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.
 - (d) **Re 21:4** 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.
- e. Like sheep we all have wandered astray from God (v. 6a).
 - (1) **Jer 50:6** 6 My people [Israel] have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains. From mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their fold.

²⁵ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 430-31.

²⁶ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 430-31.

- (2) **Jer 50:17** 17 Israel is a hunted sheep driven away by lions. First the king of Assyria devoured him, and now at last Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has gnawed his bones.
- (3) **1 Pe 2:25** 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls [Jesus].
- (4) “The essence of sin is going one’s own way, rather than God’s way.”²⁷
- (5) We cannot blame a herd instinct for our rebellion against God. We are each individually responsible.²⁸
- f. But Yahweh has laid on his Servant the sin-guilt of us all (v. 6b).
 - (1) Again Isaiah includes himself.
 - (2) **Is 1:11** 11 What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says Yahweh. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, of lambs, or of goats.
 - (3) **Is 46:7** 7 They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there. It cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble.
 - (a) The Babylonians shoulder the burden of their gods, but Yahweh’s Servant shoulders the burden of Israel’s sin.
 - (4) **Col 2:13-15** 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with [Jesus], having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This [God] set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the [heavenly and earthly] rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in [Jesus].
 - (a) The cross was God’s greatest triumph.
 - (5) **He 10:4** 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
 - (a) A human being can only substitute for a human being.²⁹
 - (6) **He 10:14** 14 For by a single offering [Jesus] has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

5. He Opened Not His Mouth (Is 53:7-9).

- a. **Is 53:7-9** 7 He was oppressed (**שׁגַג**), and he was humiliated (**עִנָה**), yet he opened not his mouth. Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter (**חַבֵּץ**), and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression (**רֹצֶעֶן**) and judgment (**טֹפְלָה**) he was taken away. And as for his generation (**רֹזֶב**), who considered/meditated (**חִשֵּׁב**) that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the moral crimes (**עַבְדָּה**) of my people (**מִזְרָח**) [Israel]? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked (**עַשְׂרָה**) and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence/wrong (**סְמֻתָה**), and there was no trickery/fraud (**חַנְרָה**) in his mouth.
- b. Although the Servant was opposed and humiliated, he did not open his mouth in protest (v. 7a).

²⁷ John A. Martin, “Isaiah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1108.

²⁸ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 431.

²⁹ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 431.

- (1) **Mt 26:62-63** 62 And the high priest stood up and said, Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you? 63 But Jesus remained silent.
- (2) **Mt 27:14** 14 But [Jesus] gave [Pilate] no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.
- (3) **Mk 15:3** 3 And the chief priests accused [Jesus] of many things. 4 And Pilate again asked him, Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you. 5 But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.
- (4) **Jn 19:9** 9 [Pilate] entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, Where are you from? But Jesus gave him no answer.
- (5) **1 Pe 2:23** 23 When [Jesus] was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.
- (6) Jesus quietly submitted to his death. He was clear-headed and conscience of what was to happen, but he did not try to stop it
- c. He was completely silent, like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep being shorn (v. 7b).
 - (1) **Ge 22:7-8** 7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, My father! And he said, Here I am, my son. He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8 Abraham said, God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son. So they went both of them together.
 - (2) **Ex 12:3-5** 3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ...5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats....
 - (3) **Le 7:5** 5 The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering to the Lord; it is a guilt offering.
 - (4) **Jer 11:19** 19 But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. I did not know it was against me they devised schemes saying, Let us destroy the tree with its fruit. Let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more.
 - (5) **Jn 1:29** 29 The next day [John] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
- d. He was taken away to die by means of an oppressively brutal judicial process (v. 8a).
 - (1) **Mk 15:1** 1 And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus, led him away, and delivered him over to Pilate.
 - (2) **Mk 15:10** 10 For [Pilate] perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up.
 - (3) **Mk 15:12-15** 12 And Pilate again said to [the Jewish crowds], Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14 And Pilate said to them, Why? What evil has he done? But they shouted all the more, Crucify him. 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.
- e. No one among his contemporaries mentally considered/mused/meditated/pondered that the Servant's life was being cut off for the moral crimes of Israel (v. 8b).

- (1) **Is 57:1-2** 1 The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart. Devout men are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity. 2 He enters into peace. They rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness.
- f. They made his grave with wicked people (pl.) (v. 9a).
- (1) **Mt 27:38** 38 Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.
- (2) **Lk 22:37** 37 For I [Jesus] tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: And he was numbered with the transgressors. For what is written about me has its fulfillment.
- g. He was with a rich man (sing.) in his death (v. 9b).
- (1) **Mt 27:57-60** 57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 And Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.
- (2) **Mk 15:42-46** 42 And when evening had come, because it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. 45 And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. 46 And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.
- h. This was even though:
- (1) He had done no violence or wrong (v. 9c).
- (a) **He 4:15** 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one [Jesus] who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.
- (b) **1 Jn 3:5** 5 You know that [Jesus] appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.
- (2) He had spoken no trickery or fraud (v. 9d).
- (a) Though he did not deserve to die, he was willing to do so.
- (b) Jesus fulfilled the requirements for a substitute:
- 1) He identified with sinners in their condemnation (vv. 4-5).
 - 2) He was outwardly and inwardly without sin (v. 9).
 - 3) He was acceptable to the holy God (vv. 6, 10).
 - 4) He willingly submitted to the substitute's role (v. 7).

6. Many Accounted Righteous (Is 53:10-12).

- a. **Is 53:10-12** 10 Yet Yahweh desired to/took pleasure in/delighted to (חָנַן) crush (כִּדְבֹּר) him. He has made him sick (נִלְתָּן). When his soul (שֶׁבֶת) makes an atonement/compensation (מֵשֶׁבֶת) for guilt, he shall see his descent (עֲמֹתָה). He shall prolong his days.

The joy/delight/wish/matter/business (חַפְץ) of Yahweh shall succeed (צִלָּח) in his hand. 11 Out of the anxious trouble (עֲמָל) of his soul (שֶׁפֶט) he shall see and be satisfied (שְׁבֻעָה). By his sweat (רַקֵּעַת) shall the Righteous one, my Servant (צַדִּיק עַבְדִּי), make many to be accounted righteous (צַדָּקָה), and he shall carry (סַכְלָה) their sin-guilt (עֹזָן). 12 Therefore I will divide him (חַלְקָה) a portion with the many (בָּרְבִּים), and he shall divide the booty/spoil/plundered goods (שְׁלִילָה) with the mighty (עֲצֹמוּמִים), because he poured out (עָרָה) his soul (שֶׁפֶט) to death (נֶתֶר) and was counted among (נָמָה) the criminals (פָּשָׁע). Yet he bore/suffered (נָשָׂא) the sin-guilt (אַפְּגָן) of many and interceded (פָּגָע) for the criminals (פָּשָׁע).

- b. Yahweh desired/delighted to crush his Servant (v. 10a).
- c. Yahweh has made him sick (v. 10b).
- d. After the Servant's soul/life (שֶׁפֶט) makes atonement for guilt, he will see his descendants (v. 10c).
 - (1) The Servant is not bringing a sacrifice; he *is* the sacrifice.³⁰
 - (2) **Le 5:15** 15 If anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of Yahweh, he shall bring to Yahweh as his compensation, a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued in silver shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, for a *guilt offering*.
 - (3) **Is 49:21** 21 Then you will say in your heart: Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away, but who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone. From where have these come?
 - (4) **Jn 1:12** 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God....
 - (5) **Heb 9:28** 28 ...[S]o Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.
- e. Yahweh shall prolong the Servant's days (v. 10d).
- f. Yahweh's desire/delight will succeed through the wise Servant (v. 10e).
- g. As a result of the anxious trouble his soul experiences, the Servant will be satisfied with what he sees (v. 11a).
 - (1) A Dead Sea Scroll says, "He shall see light." This is further proof resurrection is what Isaiah's has in mind here.
 - (2) **Jn 19:30** 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished, and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
 - (3) **He 12:2** 2 ...Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
- h. By his sweat (רַקֵּעַת) the Righteous one, Yahweh's Servant (צַדִּיק עַבְדִּי) will provide righteous (צַדָּקָה) for the many (v. 11b).
 - (1) "The many" is a precise company, numerous but not all-inclusive.³¹ The Servant's atonement is unlimited in its intention but limited in its application.
 - (2) **Ac 13:39** 39 ...And by [Jesus] everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the Torah of Moses.

³⁰ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 439.

³¹ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 439.

- (3) **Ro 3:21-25** 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the Torah, although the Torah and the Prophets testify to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Messiah for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Messiah Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.
- (4) **Ro 5:18-19** 18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's [Adam's] disobedience *the many* were made sinners, so by the one man's [Jesus'] obedience *the many* will be made righteous.
- (5) **2 Co 5:21** 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- (6) **1 Jn 2:1** 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Messiah the righteous.
- i. The Servant will carry the sin-guilt of many (v. 11c).
- (1) This verse is one of the fullest statements of atonement theology ever penned:
 - (a) The Servant knows the needs to be met and what must be done.
 - (b) He is the Righteous one, fully acceptable to God.
 - (c) He has been appointed by God to his task.
 - (d) He is free from sin.
 - (e) He identifies himself personally with our humanness and sin.
 - (f) He is personally committed to his role as Servant.
 - (g) He accomplishes his task fully.
- j. As a result, Yahweh will apportion to him the many and the strong (v. 12a).
- (1) The many may stand for believers while the strong may stand for unbelievers.³²
 - (2) **Ps 68:18** 18 You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious....
 - (3) **Jn 6:37** 37 All that the Father gives me [Jesus] will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
 - (4) **Eph 4:7-8** 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Messiah's gift. 8 Therefore it says, When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.
- k. The reason, again, is that the Servant:
- (1) Voluntarily poured out his life (*נפש*) to death (v. 12b).
 - (a) **Mk 10:45** 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
 - (b) **Mk 15:37-39** 37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.
 - (c) **Jn 10:18** 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.
 - (2) Was counted among the criminals (v. 12c).
 - (a) Jesus personally identified himself with the criminals he came to save.

³² J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 443.

1. In this way he:
 - (1) Shouldered (אָשָׁם) the sin-guilt (אַפְלָגָה) of many (v. 12d).
 - (a) The scope of Jesus's substitutionary death was universal.
 - 1) Israel.
 - a) **Jn 11:49-51** 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, You know nothing at all. 50 Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish. 51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation....
 - 2) Nations.
 - a) **1 Jn 2:2** 2 [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
 - (2) Interceded/interposed as a go-between (עִזָּה) for the criminals (עֲוָנִים) (v. 12e).
 - (a) **Is 59:16** 16 He saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no one to *intercede* (עִזָּה). Then his own arm brought him salvation (עֶשֶׂרֶת), and his righteousness (תִּצְדָּקָה) upheld him.
 - (b) **Ro 8:34** 34 Who is to condemn? Messiah Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is *interceding* for us.
 - (c) **1 Ti 2:5-6** 5 For there is one God, and there is one *mediator* between God and men, the man Messiah Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.
 - 1) Jesus is not a barrier but a bridge, the only bride to God.
 - (d) **He 7:25** 25 Consequently, [Jesus] is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, because he always lives to make *intercession* for them.

7. Application.

- a. Consider (v. 8).
- b. Believe (v. 1).
- c. Endure (1 Pe 2:20).
 - (1) **1 Pe 2:20–25** 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21 For to this you have been called, because Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return, When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

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Mark 13:9 9 “But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them.

Mark 13:26 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Mark 14:23–24 23 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 24 And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

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