



Lesson 5 April 3rd, 2021

The Suffering Servant Brings Salvation

Study Scripture – Isaiah 53:4-11

Background Scripture – Isaiah 52 & 53

Key Verse:

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5

INTRODUCTION

Our Study gives us an insight into extraordinary love.

There is a reason for this extraordinary love for we are told that the story of Jesus in the Gospels show someone who's looking for a family. So in Matthew 12:49 when Jesus was talking to the multitude His mother and brothers stood outside seeking to speak to Him and when the people around Him told Him that His Earth family which had the same blood as He were looking for Him, He pointed to His disciples and said,

“Behold, my mother and My brothers!

For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother”.

Clearly therefore Jesus longs for a family like no other family and He would go through a great deal to get the family He wants and enjoy His family, His family being those who follow Him.

So never forget that Jesus and His Father and the Spirit take great satisfaction in those that are His family, and that means us.

Now we should also never forget that God is not us. God and Jesus have a strange kind of wisdom that no one, and not even the wise Solomon, had the ability to ever exercise that kind of wisdom. The wisdom that Jesus brings, and exercises is not of this world and it looks to us like it is self-destructive. No one wants that kind of wisdom. We are not normally attracted to that. Jesus' kind of wisdom is a wisdom that disfigures Him, mars His face and makes His face and His body an almost unrecognizable and unhuman mass.

But this is Good News. So let us know that Jesus looked ordinary. The Scriptures never tells what Jesus looked like the way it tells a lot about what He did. There is only one verse that talks about the physical appearance of Jesus and what it tells us is what we probably don't like to hear. It states in Isaiah 53:2

“He had no stately form or majesty that we should look upon him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to him”.

So what does it take for us to believe who He is, that He is the **“arm of the Lord”**, the mighty power of the Lord that did so many great things for Israel? But we are told that it is this very arm of the Lord that will bring Salvation and this Salvation will come in a strange way, for it is based on different principles, and those principles do not belong to human beings, and are quite strange to them, difficult to understand.

We are looking at a wounded healer. That is kind of strange, isn't it? But we must note that what happened to Jesus brings us healing, a very all-inclusive healing, for his wounds bring us healing. That is Isaiah's message to us, namely, that if we look at the wounds of Jesus, we will be healed. One writer reminds us however:

“In order to be healed, you first need to know you are sick. The sickness that God wants to heal us of is sin. The world that we live in has largely eliminated sin from its vocabulary. Whatever problems we have, our world thinks that sin isn't one of them. The Scriptures tell us that sin is not only one of the problems, it's the source of our problems. Sin manifests itself in all sorts of ways that make it difficult to deny”.

Another writer brings us up to date with the debates around the Scripture that is constantly going on and tells us:

“The identity of the Servant, who seems to be an individual in some places and a group in others, has been a subject of scholarly debate with little consensus. Jewish people tend to think of the Servant as Israel, and it is probable that the prophet thought in those terms- although the prophet might have had an individual in mind.

The writer of the Servant Songs was looking for an individual who were represented both Israel and the Lord, and that would bring salvation through suffering”.

As an example of interpretation, Watts identifies the servant of 52:13 with “the Emperors chosen to do YHWH’s work, from Tiglath-Pileser through Cyrus”. He identifies the marred figure of 52:14 with Darius, who surprised people by becoming king of Persia even though he “was not in direct line to the throne” and occupied a relatively modest position prior to assuming the throne. He sees the one who “was despised and rejected” (53:3ff) as Zerubbabel, one of the better Kings of Judah (Watts, 786-790).

But other scholars listed in the bibliography below sees it differently.

Jewish rabbis would identify the servant as Israel or the Jewish people. There is some justification for this. In a sense Jewish people have been subjected to persecution in many settings, the Holocaust being only the best known. However, in the Isian context, the people of Judah were not innocent. God allowed the Babylonians to take them into exile as punishment for their sins. Therefore, the exiles can hardly qualify as “a perversion of justice” (53:8)-nor would they qualify as “the righteous servant” (53:11)

It is important to know what the scholars as well as other Christians are thinking, for our interest must be in knowing the truth about Scripture and our ability to defend the truths of Scripture.

No matter where you live or how well-off your circumstance may be, there remains the undeniable reality of suffering. No one is exempt. From such suffering many philosophical



questions arise-- the problem of pain has plagued man almost since the beginning, yet we are not left 'in the dark' for the Scriptures declare a day when righteousness will reign, and the dreadful effects of sin and suffering will be eradicated.

Today we will find assurance from the Scriptures that there is hope for those who suffer. This is in the prophecy of Isaiah and Mary's magnificent songs of praise. When the Bible speaks of hope, it is not as is commonly used today, where hope is something that may or may not happen. Rather, the Bible speaks of hope as an absolute certainty, anything less being not really hope.

Let us be clear from the outset. This hope only belongs to a very specific group of people and all those who reject the Messiah, have missed the meaning of His ministry and have in fact rejected true hope.

Isaiah tells of the terrible state of Israel. For centuries the people had been in a steady decline away from God, on the slippery slope of sin and darkness. The Kingdom ruler by David had been divided and ungodly kings of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, had allowed and in many cases led the people to worship pagan idols they made. The Kings made alliances with pagan kings despite the emphatic warning of the prophets not to do so. In this regard you remember the work of Elijah.

Oppression of the poor, homeless, the widows and orphans were routinely practiced, as well of course the breaking of all of God's other laws. As a result, God threatened that He would bring judgment and allow a pagan nation to take them captive. Instead of turning to God they rather sought the help of other pagans.

Judah had several godly kings, but this wasn't enough to stop their slide and they soon despised the work of God sent by His prophets, followed in the footsteps of the Northern Kingdom and were subsequently sent into exile also. Therefore much of Isaiah's message was unpleasant, it warned of serious judgment. Yet there were also the precious promises of the Messiah. The Messiah would come and put an end to the terrible injustice, rampant sin, oppression and suffering of His people.

Historians have calculated that up to the time of Herod, who ruled from 47 B.C. to 4 B.C., the Jewish nation have suffered 580 years of humiliation under the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greek empire established by Alexander the Great, the Ptolemy empire of Egypt and Syrian Seleucids (the most notorious was Antiochus Epiphanes of the "abomination of desolation fame"). They had briefly broken this humiliation after the Maccabean revolt against the Syrians, but this had lasted only for a little over 100 years, degenerating rapidly and marked by murders, scheming, political intrigue and all kinds of iniquity. Now finally Israel had fallen under the might of the Roman Empire. This empire stretched from Britain all the way to the Euphrates, down to the Atlantic and all over the Mediterranean and the Near and Far East. There was a common language and no borders for all these nations were under the Pax Romana, the peace of Rome.

In addition, the Empire was held firmly in captivity by superstition, fear, idolatry and immorality. Men worshiped the images of birds, animals, crawling creatures and lived by the



readings of the flight of birds and the entrails of animals, the movements of stars and heavenly bodies and other strange, bizarre, and outlandish speculations and practices.

Rome appointed a puppet king of Judea named Herod. He was an Edomite, a descendent of Esau and as such should never have been ruling Israel. He was a degenerate. He introduced Roman temples, built idols to Roman gods, introduced Roman games and sports and caused Roman and Gentile money to flow into the country, which led to great economic instability and suffering.

One historian wrote of Herod: **“He was Jewish in religion, heathen in practice, and monster in character”**. Another quoted the Emperor Caesar Augustus as describing Herod thus: **“It is better to be Herod’s hog than his son”**.

Herod was not nice to his family either. He was a murderer.

The line of David was at rock bottom, not respected, not noticed, and utterly ignored. There was no escape from darkness and economic suffering and disease. There was little hope in the land. The suffering of Israel was immense as was the suffering of the many other Gentiles in the lands that been conquered. It is in this scene came the Servant of Yahweh. His coming was not in the way that others expected. There could be no military Kingdom and political freedom without first God bringing freedom from sin. This freedom would come from the Suffering Servant who brought Salvation, bearing the suffering of all those around Him as well as those to live in future.

The prophet Isaiah made it clear to Israel that someone was coming to do great things for the people of Israel. Unfortunately Israel’s response was what many of us do with Scripture; they (and us) selected verses in Scripture that appealed to them and created a vision of a Messiah that suited themselves. We are following exactly in their steps. They selected verses which told them about a Messiah who would be a Deliverer that would come with overwhelming military might and power to vanquish the Roman tyrants, set Israel free, and as God promised, make them chief of the nations of the earth.

The ‘Servant Songs’ of Isaiah in their different predictions, however, give us different aspects of the work of the Messiah that present a picture very different from then current Jewish concepts. It is not much different today, for many pictures of Messiah focus on material rather than spiritual blessings and promised relief from suffering rather than ‘cross-bearing’.

Chapter 52:13 tells us that Messiah would have a tremendous impact on all the people, that He would be very successful in everything that He envisaged. He would be *exalted, lifted up*, and made *very high*. He would have tremendous accomplishments during and following His Ministry.

His impact on the world would be such that He would never be forgotten. He would influence many nations and many Kings and rulers would be silenced by His deeds. These rulers would see things that they had never before contemplated, and they would be forced to spend much time considering the work of Messiah. We thus have a look at the future work of the Lord Jesus Christ for when He comes again, He would be treated totally differently than at the First Coming.



Isaiah in the same breath however also spoke about a different aspect of the life of Messiah. He would suffer to such an extent that His appearance would be marred beyond human semblance. He would suffer to such an extent that He would resemble a bloody mess, so that people passing by Him would be astonished at His visage. No wonder the people felt that they could mock Him when they passed by the Cross at Calvary.

This entire situation would be unbelievable. The report that Isaiah speaks of would raise more questions than answers. It would be hard to believe that this 'Suffering Servant' could be the arm of the Lord. It should be noted that the phrase "*arm of the Lord*" is equivalent to the power of the Lord. God's mighty arm which brought His people out of Egypt, out of Babylon and did many, great wonders for Israel. It was to be expected that God's Servant would bring about a new Deliverance, a new Exodus, taking action as in the days of old.

This questioning seems to come as well from the believing community and because of their preconceptions, the message would not be an easy one to accept. Certainly we know that even the disciples who loved Him, followed Him, and saw His works, had great difficulty with many aspects of the message of Jesus.

At this point we should examine ourselves for it is quite possible that our eyes might be half shut and our hearts a little bit cold and so when we read Scripture, we do not really see what it is saying to us.

We claim to be messengers and members of a community committed to daily bringing a message of hope to the world and so we have to examine what we are saying carefully and to make sure that we believe it ourselves.

Isaiah explained the reason for unbelief saying first that the Servant would grow up before God as a "tender plant", "tender shoot" or a "young plant". A tender plant or shoot is like a little suckling on a trunk of a tree that sucks life from the tree. Some interprets this as reflecting the hidden years during which Jesus toiled in obscurity working in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth, with no one knowing who He was except God the Father.

The Servant is also described as a "*root out of dry ground*". He would come from a royal line that had become impoverished and whose claim to leadership in Israel no one would recognize. He would come from a "parched ground" a place from where one could not expect a root to grow.

Then Isaiah described the appearance of the Servant, and this is the only verse that tells us about the physical appearance of Jesus and how He looked. We should be aware that all those pictures of Jesus that we see are really idle speculations.

Jesus in His bodily form was simply unimpressive and gave people no hint of the glory that dwelt within Him. He simply was an ordinary person. The Messiah was dismissed because He



was from an ordinary place and appeared as an ordinary man, which meant to Israel that He could not be the real deal.

But let us look beyond appearance to the reason Jesus appeared that way. Jesus came from an extraordinary place to take on ordinary flesh and blood, to grow up in an ordinary place, and to mix with ordinary people and not just the high and mighty. This shows us that God loves ordinary persons like you and me, (Hebrews 2:14).

He has shown us that if a “tender shoot” and a “root out of a parched ground” could live, survive, and flourish, God can make something special things happen, something supernatural, and transform ordinary men and women.

Many Bible teachers teach that God delights in blessing and using ordinary people and making His mighty arm visible in ordinary people such as us, to show His extraordinary love.

The Servant of Jehovah was “*despised*” for there was nothing about Him to make anyone think at first that He was a King. It is amazing to think that the Lord of Glory, the Creator of Heaven and earth, who came to lay down His life for His friends and bring peace and universal goodwill to man could be despised and forsaken, but that was exactly what happened to Him; even by His close disciples and friends.

The people and rulers sneered at His gospel and rejected the truths He brought from His Father. They made nasty cracks about His birth, implying that He was an illegitimate son. They called Him a drunkard and glutton and said He was possessed by a devil. They applied the disparaging term of Samaritan to Him. Eventually they put a bounty on His head and branded Him Public Enemy Number One.

His brothers did not believe in Him and were embarrassed by what He said and did, and it was only after He was resurrected that they came to believe in Him.

No wonder then that He was “*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*”. You would be exactly the same if you were despised and if you loved the people that despised you. The sin of the people around Him caused sorrow and grief for Jesus, and Jesus felt it deeply. We show contempt for Jesus and His gospel by rejecting His atoning sacrifice, when we are indifferent to what He wants us to do, when we do not witness about Him, prefer some other way of salvation apart from faith in Christ, have other gods, are ashamed of Him and make feeble or no attempt to walk in fellowship with Him.

Isaiah said with some sadness that men hid their faces from Him, meaning He was shunned, treated like a leper. The Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, knew loneliness.

He was not esteemed. One writer comments on this word as follows:

“The word translated ‘esteem’ is an accounting term used in assessing the value of something. The Servant is seen as having no value. Jesus was seen as having no value, even



among his own countrymen-especially among his own countrymen: “He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive him”. (John 1:11)”

The Servant of God challenged the prevailing thought, agendas, and lifestyle of the people of His day and offered the people a different way. The people and their rulers rejected Him and His teaching. But because He loved His people so much, He willingly endured the worst kind of human treatment imaginable. They rejected him while He wept for them, (Luke 19: 41-42).

One writer speaks directly to those who consider themselves servants of the Lord. He says: **“For us, as servants of the Lord, here comes the hard part. We move out into the world, and we experience some of what Jesus endured. Jesus tells his disciples, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they would also persecute you’”. (John 15: 20)**

Have you felt despised and forsaken?

Have you felt at times as if your life could be characterized by sorrow? Have you felt as if you know grief a little too well?

Have you felt somehow on the outside of things? Have you felt lonely?

Has it seemed at times that no one really valued you?

Jesus felt all of this. Now, feeling all of this as you have, are you going to get angry and bitter? Are you going to fight back or withdraw?

Or are you going to come back loving like the Servant of the Lord?

Servants of the Lord endure all manner of pain. They feel it, yes. They process it and pray over it. They are knocked down, yes. But like their master, they get up and come back with more love to give.”

THE TEXT

Verse 4. So here we have a situation where an extraordinary person with extraordinary love appeared to man with an ordinary appearance. We are now looking at a wounded healer, a sacrifice by a Servant, a universal remedy, and a Servant that enjoys His family after His amazing work.

So it is not surprising when Isaiah begins chapter 53 with **“Who is believed our report?”**

The wealthy and powerful Ethiopian eunuch had been reading Isaiah 53 on his way from Jerusalem to Ethiopia and God had to send the evangelist Philip to join him in his chariot and it was explained to him that the passage spoke of Jesus Christ. Philip preached Jesus Christ to the eunuch using the Text in Isaiah 53 so that we have no doubts as to whom Isaiah was referring. We are thus introduced to the suffering Messiah who will be successful, but nevertheless misunderstood. He would be a substitute. The Messiah would suffer but He would be submissive. But thanks be to God the suffering Messiah would be foreordained for it would please the Lord to bruise Him.

This is the heart of the Good News, the gospel of God. It shows our Lord's substitutionary sacrifice, affirming that Jesus took our place, carefully stating that Jesus Himself was sinless,



and did not suffer for His own transgressions for there were none. Instead He suffered for the sins of others.

This verse 4 is introduced by the word *“surely”* indicating that something completely unexpected or amazingly different is coming. It was certain and quite amazing that this Servant that was also despised and rejected, treated as a pariah, not valued by the very people that He came to save, would still in spite of this bear not His but *‘our griefs’*, and not His but *‘our sorrows’*.

It is important to note that the word translated *‘griefs’* usually refer to sickness or weakness. The word translated *‘sorrows’* was used to convey mental anguish. These were evils that were the consequence of human sin and He relieved men of these evils in all its forms.

The word *“bear”* means that something has been lifted off a person and placed on another, as was typified on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest laid the sins of the nation on the head of the goat and sent it away into the wilderness, (Leviticus 16: 20-21). So here the Servant of the Lord bears the sins of the people, the griefs of the nations, the illnesses and weaknesses that came from sin.

The words used indicate that these were taken and carried as if it was one’s own and so ‘expiation’ would be made, (Leviticus 5: 1,17). Since the person bearing the sin was not himself personally the guilty person this meant that bearing the sin was also in a ‘mediatorial capacity’, (Leviticus 10: 17).

One writer says: **“Both of these are to be understood in the sense of an expiatory bearing, and not merely of taking away. The meaning is not merely that the Servant of God entered into the fellowship of our sufferings, but that He took upon Himself the sufferings which we had to bear and deserved to bear, and therefore not only took them away, but bore them in His own person, that He might deliver us from them.**

The Jewish community, whether believing or unbelieving, did not believe in the message that Isaiah spoke about the Servant. They wanted a different kind of Servant. It is therefore very important what one writer warns:

“Success has always been a great liar. To be a success is not necessarily to be a success in the eyes of God. To be a success is not necessarily to be a success in the eyes of men. Many of us know people who have been extremely successful in business. And yet we know they have been successful in dishonest ways. And they are not successful even in the eyes of men. Success is a liar.

Success is a great liar. But in the case of our Lord’s life, success was a liar, but success was also a truth teller also”.

We note therefore that Jesus was a success in doing and achieving what He came to do. He was a success in the eyes of God.



In the case of the unbelieving majority they assessed things differently, for Israel thought that the Servant was suffering for His own sins and getting what He deserved. Some Jews in their interpretation of Isaiah believed the Servant was to be “stricken, smitten of God and afflicted” with maybe some kind of disease.

The idea that the Servant was to be stricken, smitten and afflicted, suffering not for His own sins but for their sins and wrongdoing was unbelievable. But Isaiah was quite emphatic that Israel's assessment of the Servant was theologically wrong. The Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, came to bear and carry the griefs and sorrows of Israel.

Verse 5. The word “*but*” reinforces what really happened. Isaiah was emphatic that Israel was as pagan as Rome, and its nationalistic agenda was quite wrong, for it had no interest in bringing the Lord's salvation to the world. Isaiah was saying that the forgiveness of sins of the nation could only be achieved by the Servant of the Lord. Israel was in sin and would have to be judged and suffer, though the nation was previously forgiven and returned from exile in Babylon.

Israel held a false idea about the Servant. Violence would be done to Him. He would be wounded to death. His violent and painful death was because of “our” sins and iniquities and because He had taken them on Himself, making atonement in our stead. He was pierced and crushed, having to suffer a cruel and painful death. One writer states:

“The servant did not submit to affliction through apathetic resignation but as a bold choice to break the back of sin”.

Sin was a disease and an affliction for the entire race, bringing with it deep human depravity, and making even those that consider themselves to be decent or good people quite the opposite.

Jesus according to the Apostle Paul as stated in Corinthians 5:21 was made by God “*to be sin on our behalf*”, though He knew no sin. One writer notes:

“If we follow the imagery provided by the words, it's not hard to form a picture of what Jesus did for us. We are traveling through life with this immense burden on our backs called sin. It weighs us down with griefs and sorrows. At the moment when we feel that we can't take another step, Jesus joins us on the road. He lifts the burden off our backs, he places it on his back, and he carries it for us. One is reminded of Matthew 11: 28-30 where Jesus says, “Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my load is light”.

Jesus, then takes the burdens that are ours, and he walks the road no one could walk, the road from Jerusalem to Calvary. As he travels on this road, he travels with a piece of wood on his back. That piece of wood is the burden he took from you and me and, quite literally, billions of others. The burden appears to be unbearable, yet he journeys on. He goes on ahead of us to take on our fate. He has miles to go before he sleeps.



If we have the wrong assessment of what was happening as Jesus was hanging on the cross, as the Jews of old, the implications can be similarly tragic. To miss that he was suffering for our sins is to miss out on forgiveness of sins and eternal life. It is to miss out on being healed.”

There are two words used for sins, namely, *'transgressions'*, which are willful violations of God's law, and *'iniquities'*, which stress the depravity of human nature, and so we see sin in both internal and external expressions.

The Servant suffered for both expressions of our sins. He was actively chastened and scourged in the way that we should have suffered, for He bore the justice of God in our stead.

He suffered so that we might experience both healing and well-being; the wholeness coming from nearness to God. Men have to be healed or restored to God to experience the deep blessings of intimacy with God. This is the real meaning of peace, for peace means wholeness.

We can only be healed and made whole if we know that we are broken and sick. We cannot live in denial and employ quick fix solutions to repair ourselves. We can never figure out for ourselves the formula for healing nor develop for ourselves the remedy.

We must come to understand that the problem has been dealt with and our sins have been paid for and therefore nothing needs to stand between us and God.

The medicine has been prescribed and it is the stripes of the Saviour. The physical and spiritual sufferings of our Lord and His atoning death is the way that our souls are healed.

It is to be noted that Jesus is an appointed representative and He suffered as a public individual. He is the last Adam. He is the rock on which we have to rest, the Substitute accepted and appointed by God, covered with our stripes.

There is no other cure other than the one brought about by the remarkable medicine of a stricken Saviour. Just think of how sin appears to the eyes of the Eternal Father who sees it as a hideous and detestable thing, a thing which He will not even look upon for His eyes are too pure.

Sin is a hideous monster, but the wonderful medicine provided by the Saviour gets to the root of the mischief and removes the curse that fell on man through Adam's sin, effectively removing it.

The stripes of Christ have the power to eradicate sin, to pull it out by the roots. It has the power to put to death the power of sin in our body. Jesus' medicine can restore all the powers of the believer to resist the disease of sin. Jesus' stripes can restore to every man and woman what they have lost because of sin.

Remember too that the application of this medicine is extremely easy. All one has to do is to hear about its curative powers. Next comes faith from the hearing, believing that Jesus is the Son of God and that He will save your soul. And as you think and meditate on Jesus, you



depend on Jesus to keep you, and you keep on studying about Him, and learn about Him and grow in knowledge of Him, never leaving His side and trusting Him to keep you.

Verse 6. Now Isaiah makes the beautiful and truthful confession that sin is common to all men, including the elect of God. Everyone in his or her own way, have unique and peculiar ways to turn aside into sin.

There is no place for self-righteousness. Men are consciously guilty, guilty without excuse, guilty with aggravation, and should all stand together admitting, ***“All we like sheep have gone astray”***.

That is repentance. Isaiah leaves no room for anyone of us to think that we are untainted by sin.

Isaiah uses the image of wandering sheep to illustrate sin. We are told by shepherds that a sheep will go through a hole in the fence with no difficulty but will never be able to find that hole to come back into the flock, no matter how large the tear in the fence and no matter what danger may confront them.

All men and women, Isaiah says, have strayed from the Shepherd and chosen their particular way, rejecting the Lord for something that they think is better. This is deliberate and willful departure. Every man and woman has created their own way. This means that they have all rejected the Lord and worshipped something else.

This is idolatry and shows itself in iniquities and transgressions, and of course these results in griefs and sorrows. All of us are guilty of sin and deserve to be pierced, crushed, chastened, and scourged, and each of us deserves to die. The death that we deserve is eternal destruction and banishment from the glory and the presence of the Lord.

So now consider yourself and the ways that you seek love, security, and significance outside of a relationship with God. To what ways have you turned? If you have turned away from God, it is sin, and you deserve punishment.

All of us are guilty of sin and the sin of all of us has fallen on the Servant.

It is to be especially noted that the sacrifice of the Servant is adequate for all of us, for no sin is too great for Him to bear.

Most peculiarly we are told that the LORD, the Father, is the one who has put all our sins onto the Servant. Jesus has had to deal with the iniquities that so we could overcome.

The Servant of God is the beloved of God and whatever He does is well pleasing to God, having been ordained in the eternal councils of God.

Some scholars believe there is a remarkable parallel between the five stanzas in Isaiah 53 and the five offerings of Leviticus. One summarizes

“Are you acquainted with the five offerings of Leviticus? In the first chapter of Leviticus, Moses describes the burnt offering. In the next chapter, he describes the media offerings. In



the next chapter he describes the peace offerings. In the fourth chapter, he describes the sin offerings. And in the fifth and sixth chapters, he describes the trespass offerings.

Now the burnt offering is an offering which presents the ministry warlord typically as one who gives himself wholeheartedly to do the will of God, to serve God in a completely obedient life. Now that is surely set before us here. My servant shall deal prosperously. He will really carry over the will of God and the will of God is the work of his death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession. And through this, he shall be successful....

The Second offering was the meal offering. Did you notice what Jesus is called here? A man of sorrows. Now in the meal offering resentment in Leviticus, the second offering, that offering is designed to represent in the offering of the fine flour. The perfect humanity of our Lord.

The meal offering. Fine flour. What a beautiful picture of the character of Jesus Christ”.

The third offering was the peace offering. It was the offering that the priests brought which was designed to represent an atonement that is using these. Isn't it interesting that right here in this section that chastisement that brought our peace was laid upon him. And so from the saving work of Jesus Christ, we have peace. That is, peace with God.

Verses 7-9. Isaiah now makes it quite clear that Jesus Himself was sinless and He did not defend Himself. He suffered in silence, never once speaking to save Himself to escape the penalty that both Jew and Gentile rulers were determined to levy on Him. The only time He spoke was to acknowledge that He was a King but a different kind of King from what Pilate envisaged. When He was reviled, He did not revile. He would not even say a word to the contemptuous and wicked Herod.

It has often been pointed out that in the matter of the suffering, submissive Messiah, there is what is called the “triumph of silence”, for silence was a strange thing in the Old Testament given that men did not ordinarily keep silent when under God's discipline. They blamed others, they blamed God, or the contest their guilt.

Verse 8. “The fourth offering was the sin offering. That was an offering in which the transgression of Israel was covered and when a man sinned, he brought a sin offering. Part of that offering was taken and burnt on the mercy seat and it brought up a sweet savor to God. And then the majority of the animal was taken outside the camp and there it was burned. A token of judgment. And you will remember that Jesus when he died did not die in Jerusalem. Do you remember what happened to him? He went outside to get caught outside the kingdom. It was as if they were typically saying to everybody, we do not think that Jesus of Nazareth even belongs in the fellowship of Israel. And so they slew him outside at Calvary.

Since the Servant was innocent what happened to Him was basically unjust. But He was the sin offering for Israel. He was denied any spiritual comfort from religious practice. He was killed while childless, which means in Israel that His existence was an utterly futile existence.

Note that the emphasis here in this Text is again on substitutionary atonement, is stressed we saw in verses four, five, six, seven. One writer describes this:

“Atonement has to do with making amends for sin or repairing the spiritual damage caused by sin. It also has to do with restoring relationships that were broken by sin-- in particular the



relationship that we enjoyed with God prior to the introduction of sin into the world. Our sin (or failure to do God's will-- our willful disobedience) broke that relationship because God is holy (morally and spiritually perfect) and expects us to be holy as well (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15).

Our sin, therefore, creates a conflict for God. On the one hand, God is repulsed by our sin, but on the other hand, he loves us. On the one hand, he cannot bring himself to invite us into full fellowship while we are tainted with sin, but on the other hand, he cannot bring himself to dismiss us totally.

So, in keeping with his holiness (which demands that we be punished) and his love (which demands that we be reconciled) God devised a process by which he can make us holy again so that he might receive us into full fellowship—a process known as the substitutionary atonement— “substitutionary” meaning that God will accept a substitute to absorb the punishment for our sins and “atonement” meaning that we can be restored to full fellowship with God”.

Verse 9. When He finally died the Romans did not have the opportunity to throw His body on the rubbish heap as the Jewish rulers had intended and neither did the vultures have the opportunity to tear His body to pieces for their food. He had been afflicted and despised by the living and rejected but after His ministry he was given a strange burial which while not a totally honourable burial in death He was buried among the wealthy who this text implies did not come by all their money honestly. There might have been some wickedness involved but the sin offering was laid to rest as one writer states, “with the guilty of the guilty”. Instead of the schemes of the wicked a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, asked Pilate for Jesus’ body and put it in his brand-new tomb that had never been used.

Verse 10. You should never get the idea that God had finally forsaken His Own son. He was a servant, and He was not abandoned for He was carrying out a purpose. The Lord prepared His Servant to be crushed for our sins. The Servant gave His soul or life as a guilt offering, for He was willing to please His Father, even if it meant bearing sin and being pierced and crushed. All of this was determined in the eternal councils before the creation of the world and so it could be said of Jesus that He was slain before the creation of the world.

So it makes no sense to ask in an accusatory way who was responsible for the death of Jesus and to say that it was the Jews that were responsible or that the Gentiles crucified Jesus and Satan was responsible. Both statements are true to a certain extent, for the Jewish rulers were responsible for they delivered Jesus up to be crucified but also Pilate had to give permission for Jesus to be crucified. But to arrive at any meaningful conclusion about what really happened we have to go beyond those statements.

Scripture answers what happened in Romans 8:32 and explains what Isaiah meant when he said that it pleased the Lord to bruise the Servant. The Apostle tells us: *“He who spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”*



Obviously then, God so loved the lost tribes of men, and Jesus the Son so loved the lost tribes of men, that they were both willing and pleased to execute the plan of salvation. The Father was willing to deliver His Son up to death, so that men might be cured of the disease and the death brought by sin. So it pleased the Father to bruise Him

The suffering of the Servant was the way to glory, and the way would lead to the establishment of the creation of a family bought and purchased by God. Jesus saw His offspring, His family for those that are born again through Jesus are His offspring, and His family.

The Text speaks of the Servant's resurrection and His satisfaction at what His sufferings accomplished. His days would be prolonged, He would not be cut off. We are made the seed of Jesus through His death. We are united with Him and so we are moved to gratitude and to love, loving Him because He first loved us.

So we note the look of the final offering in Leviticus, the trespass offering:

“When we read, *“when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin”*, the word is *asham*, an offering for sin and that's the very word that is used to the trespass offering, the feast of the offerings. So he was the trespass offering and he did all that the trespass offering was designed to represent for us. Isn't it striking, five stanzas, five offerings? The five offerings are designed of course to represent five different facets of the saving work of Jesus Christ.”

The Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is therefore outlined for us in the different emphases and stresses.

“He offered himself holy to God, the burnt offering. He was the perfect man. The meal offering. He provides peace through his sacrifice. The peace offering. He dies for sin. And the trespass offering, not only does he die for sin but even the effects of sin and the way it touches others. That is covered by the saving ministry of the Lord Jesus”.

It is really amazing. You would have thought that when God looks at this terrible perversion of justice His son suffered, He would be so upset that He would want to kill everybody on earth and destroy the Earth. But instead He was pleased that this innocent servant would bear the suffering of the guilty so that they could be absolved of their sin.

It is truly amazing how God transformed something that is so evil that men do to achieve some incredibly great good.

Verse 11. His days are prolonged because of the pleasure of the Lord and so the days of His seed will be prolonged. The Servant's posterity must remain. Nothing can destroy the seed. The Servant will keep His eyes always on His seed and He will be intensely delighted, having pleasure at all times when He sees what He has accomplished.



The pleasure of the Lord ultimately must be the fact that the Servant Jesus, the beloved Son, now has a family that He has deserved. This family is what gives the Father pleasure. The Servant looks at what the travail of His soul accomplished, and He is satisfied.

This desire in the heart of the Servant was so relentless and powerful that it took Him through pain, death and torture to achieve what He always wanted, a world freed from pain, injustice, crying, sorrow, sadness, a world where men would now live in peace and fulfill the possibilities that God had built into them when The Father first created men. So Hebrews tells us *“For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame”*.

So the joy of the Father and the Servant is that we become part of His family, accepting the salvation that He has brought. The good pleasure of the Father is the vital force of the gospel and so nothing will stop it until every one of the elect is brought home.

The work of the Servant will and must prosper. All the great difficulties have already been met and surpassed. Everyone who has been called will be kept and preserved.

Verse 12. Those redeemed by Christ are heirs with Christ, says Romans 8:17. Those in the family of God through Christ will freely inherit all things.

This is a love story. The Servant poured his life out onto death, being rejected, despised, falsely accused, murdered, and classed with transgressors. Satan thought the death of Jesus meant that God had lost, but he was wrong.

The Servant justified many and bore their iniquities, it was most reasonable, logical and righteous that He should receive a reward. He won a great victory and so would share the spoils with His family. He would be honored for He was never and could never be a transgressor.

CONCLUSION

So because of Jesus’ unbelievably great and supernatural divine love, He now has a family with brothers and sisters. We can never understand why God did what He did. Divine love is something beyond our understanding. Why Jesus did not shrink from sinners can never be explained by mortal men or even angels.

We can only sing in gratitude:

**Oh, love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee.
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths it’s flow
May richer, fuller be.**



So our war cry should be always as one writer said Victory, Victory! The hand of the Father guarantees victory. The victory is glorious, and it is sure. The victory comes from Christ's work for He bore the sins of many and made intercession for transgressors.

Now look at yourself. You are considered valuable. The Father and the Son showed us by their actions that they think that we are worth fighting for. Jesus endured great anguish to enjoy us, His family. Our only adequate response is to love the Servant and His Father.

