

Jesus Christ – GOD’S Supreme Servant; OUR Suffering Savior

Isaiah 53 (Isaiah 52:13-15 & Isaiah 53)

Isaiah 53 was written by the prophet through inspiration of the Holy Spirit some seven centuries before Jesus Christ was crucified and two centuries before crucifixion was invented as a form of capital punishment. This Messianic prophecy is often referred to in the New Testament and always applied directly to Jesus Christ. The passage is in the form of a five stanza blank verse poem of three verses each.

The first stanza (52:13-15) functions as a prologue to the poem – it features GOD/FATHER PROPHESYING OF HIS SON’S (THE SERVANT’S) INITIAL HUMILIATION & ULTIMATE EXALTATION. This stanza prophesies of both the First (52:1,2) and Second (52:3) Advents.

The middle three stanzas (53:1-9) record A PROPHECY OF THE REPENTANT REMNANT OF ISRAEL SPEAKING OF HOW THEY MISUNDERSTOOD (IN THE FIRST ADVENT) GOD’S SERVANT BUT NOW UNDERSTAND THE REDEMPTIVE PLAN OF GOD IN THE SERVANT’S (*Jesus Christ’s*) HUMILIATION.

The last stanza (53:10-12) functions as an epilogue to the poem; again featuring GOD/FATHER PROPHESYING OF HIS SERVANT’S (*Jesus Christ’s*) SUCCESS AND ULTIMATE EXALTATION.

The Supreme Servant - Isaiah 52:13-15 GOD/FATHER/LORD SPEAKING

Isa 52:13 Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. 14 As many were astonished at you — his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind — 15 so shall he sprinkle many nations. 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.

Prophecy regarding Jesus Christ’s First Advent:

- v13 God prophesies My Servant *shall act wisely*; i.e. He will perfectly succeed in His redemptive mission.
- v13 God prophesies His Servant: (1) *shall be high* – Jesus Christ seated at God’s right hand in Heaven
(2) *shall be lifted up* – Jesus Christ’s Ascension to Heaven
(3) *shall be exalted* – Jesus Christ’s Resurrection from the grave

Prophecy regarding Jesus Christ’s Second Advent:

- vs14,15b Just as mankind was astonished at how disfigured Jesus looked at His crucifixion – so shall they be astonished at how magnificent He looks glorified on His throne in the Millennial Kingdom.
- v15a God’s Servant *shall sprinkle many nations* can mean either “astonish” or “purify, make righteous.” Whether “astonish” or “purify, make righteous” is meant – the redemptive/sanctifying work of Christ’s blood has world-wide impact. Both are reasonable, but I prefer the “purify, make righteous.”

1st Pet 1:2b that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood. (see also Heb 10:22; 12:24)

Rev 5:9b You were slain and did purchase for God with Your blood men from every tribe/tongue/people/nation.

The Scorned Servant - Isaiah 53:1-3 REPENTANT REMNANT OF ISRAEL SPEAKING

Isa 53:1 Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD/Father been revealed? 2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

- v1 The rhetorical question is like saying “who knew - we didn’t get that Jesus was God’s Christ/Messiah.”
- vs2,3 GOD/Father sent His Son to demonstrate love by redeeming lost sinners. But Israel did not understand their problem was sin – not persecution; hence they were expecting their salvation to be political, and to come as a mighty King. God sent His Son to resolve their sin problem but they did not “get” God’s plan and concluded the Jesus of Nazareth *had no form or majesty that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him* hence *He was despised; rejected by men; we esteemed Him not.*

The Suffering Servant - Isaiah 53:4-6 REPENTANT REMNANT OF ISRAEL SPEAKING

4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned — every one — to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- v4b Before repenting, the nation of Israel *esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.*
- vs4a,5 This suffering Servant, Jesus, paid our sin penalty as our substitute: *Surely He has borne our griefs; and carried our sorrows; He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.* (2nd Imputation)
- v6a All we like sheep have gone astray. Refers to Adam's sin imputed to all mankind. (1st Imputation)
- v6b *We have turned — every one — to his own way.* Refers to our personal sins heaped on top of Adam's sin.
- v6c This verse starts and ends with the word "all." The problem of all is met with God's solution for all. *the LORD/Father has laid on His Servant (Jesus) the iniquity of us all.* (2nd Imputation)

The Submissive Servant - Isaiah 53:7-9 REPENTANT REMNANT OF ISRAEL SPEAKING

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered 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 and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

- vs7,8 Jesus gave no defense to the false charges because He was there for the express purpose of dying for us! Though He said nothing, many declared Him "just:" Pilate's wife, Pilate, the thief, the centurion.
- v9 Man would have thrown His body on the refuse pile for animals to eat and then to be burned – but GOD intervened for His Successful Servant; and arranged for His body to be buried in a rich man's grave.

The Successful Servant - Isaiah 53:10-12 GOD/FATHER/LORD SPEAKING

10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

- v10a For GOD's purpose of redeeming us: *it was the will of the LORD to crush His Servant.*
- v10b,11a Jesus Christ took the bodily suffering from man, but took our soul suffering from GOD/Father. *GOD/Father has put His Servant, to grief; when Jesus' soul makes an offering for our guilt. 11 Out of the anguish of Jesus' soul shall GOD the Father see and be satisfied;*
- v10c God the Father promises to raise and glorify His Servant after His suffering/death. *Jesus shall see his offspring; the LORD/Father shall prolong His days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in Jesus' hand.*
- v11b GOD's Servant both knew and agreed with the Godhead's plan of salvation for mankind and was willing to carry it out: *by His knowledge shall the Righteous One, my Servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.* (3rd & 2nd Imputation)
- v12 This passage states that the Servant's Sacrifice will yield many redeemed souls and they/we are the Spoil/prize of the spiritual battle; the Servant will share the benefits (Heaven) with the redeemed and even now intercedes for us at GOD's right hand. *Therefore I, GOD/Father, will divide My Servant a portion with the many, and My Servant shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.*