

The Song of the Suffering Servant

Isaiah's Servant Songs

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

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Isaiah's Servant Songs

42:1-13 *The Elect Servant*

49:1-13 *The Faithful Servant*

50:4-11 *The Learned Servant*

52:13-53:12 *The Suffering Servant*

61:1-11 *The Joyful Servant*

I. The Servant of the Lord (cf. Mk 14:49)

Isaiah 52:13–53:12

¹³Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. ¹⁴Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men; ¹⁵So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.

¹Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. ³He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶All 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.

⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. ⁸He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ⁹And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. ¹¹He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

II. The Song of the Suffering Servant

A – Exalted Sufferer (52:13-15)

B – Rejected Sufferer (53:1-3)

C – Substitute Sufferer (53:4-6 cf. 2 Cor 5:21)

B' – Innocent Sufferer (53:7-9)

A' – Rewarded Sufferer (53:10-12)

III. The Call to be Suffering Servants

We have seen throughout the Servant Songs that *we become like what we* _____. The more we gaze upon Christ and worship Him, the more we learn who we are and what our calling is. So as we gaze upon *God's Suffering Servant*, who endured suffering that He might reconcile us to God and enter into His glory, we will likewise become suffering servants who embrace the sufferings of this life knowing that God will glorify us with Jesus.

A. The Servant must suffer (cf. 49:4a, 7; 50:6)

Though Isaiah's previous songs *describe* the path of suffering which the Servant would travel, they do not reveal *why this path* was necessary. Why must He suffer? According to Scripture, all humanity is in _____; by nature, we are alienated from God, from one another, from our own selves, and from the earth. Hence, if God is going to rescue the world from sin and idolatry, then He must deal with our _____. He does this by sending His Servant as a substitutionary sacrifice (52:15; 53:4-6,8,10-12). Only by suffering could the Servant cover our sin and bring us out of _____.

B. The servants must suffer (cf. Mk 8:31-38; 9:30-37; 10:32-45; Phil 2:5-7)

If this message is so clear in the Scriptures, why did almost all Israel miss it? The answer is quite simple: by and large they failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah because *they did not want to* _____ *but to be served*. They knew that the calling of subjects is to be like their king. As Jesus said to His disciples, "*Remember the words that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*" (Jn 15:20). The character of the King shapes the character of His people. A suffering Messiah would entail a suffering people.

⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. (Phil 2:5-7)

C. The promise of glory (cf. Is 54:1-3; Rom 8:16-18; 2 Cor 4:7-11, 16-18)

Yet we do not endure suffering stoically, resigned to an impersonal fate. No! We endure suffering in hope, trusting in the promises of our Heavenly Father:

¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom 8:16-18)

If we _____ with Him, we shall also be glorified together with Him. Hence, the sufferings of this present time are *light and momentary* while the glories to come are *weighty and eternal* (cf. 2 Cor 4:16-18). So we can sing even in our suffering:

¹Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. ²Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. ³For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited.

IV. Conclusion