

Dr. Robert Chisholm, Isaiah's Servant Songs, Session 4: The Suffering Servant of the Lord (B) (Isaiah 52:12-53:12)

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm and his teaching on Isaiah's Servant Songs. This is session 4, The Suffering Servant of the Lord, Part B. Isaiah 52:12-53:12.

Let's get back to our study of Isaiah 53. We left off at verse 8, and again I'm reading from the Net Bible translation. In this next verse, there are a couple of different ways you can take the first sentence. I translated it. He was led away after an unjust trial, but there are other options in understanding the Hebrew that we could take.

Another option would be after a coercive legal decision or something of that nature, or unfairly, with no one to defend him, or even after being arrested and judged. So sometimes the Hebrew is a little difficult. Words can have different nuances depending on the context, and sometimes there's ambiguity, but I went with He was led away after an unjust trial.

I'll put in a little plug for the Net Bible since I was involved in it. It's now operated by Thomas Nelson, but we have notes. Hence, the translator had the opportunity to, as they were translating it, run into a situation like this where there might be three different options. They're probably going to be reflected in various translations.

We were able to put a translator's note in there explaining the options and why we chose the particular one. At any rate, He was led away after an unjust trial. That'll work.

And then it says, and as for his generation, who noticed? But I translated it, but who even cared? And a generation, we sometimes think of the next generation, but I believe this Hebrew word generation is sometimes used for one's contemporary generation. So, who among his contemporary generation even gave it a thought? Who even cared? And then it says, indeed, He was cut off from the land of the living. And if you study that expression, cut off from the land of living, elsewhere in the Old Testament, that doesn't refer to imprisonment or something like that.

It's referring to death. Yeah, when you're cut off, the land of the living is where people are living and moving and breathing and going about their business, and to be cut off from it means you've gone to Sheol. And if you study that expression and its use in the Old Testament, you'll see that that is indeed the case.

And then there's a causal construction in the Hebrew text. Because of the Pesha, the rebellion of... and the Hebrew text says, my people, because of the rebellion of my people. So he's cut off from the land of the living.

That suggests to me that he died. He was killed. His suffering culminated in death.

And why was that so? Because of the rebellion of my people, to whom the punishment was due. So once again, we're getting into the idea that they deserve to be punished. He didn't.

But he was willing to take the punishment for them, and so he was cut off from the land of the living because of their rebellion. But if it's my people who are speaking, it could be the prophet now. The prophet, I have been arguing, the prophet is speaking as a representative of the people, and so he's using we and us.

But he could conceivably just use the first-person singular, as the speaker, I. The rebellion of my people. The other option here is that you could read it as his people. Read it a different pronoun there, and that's what Qumran has.

That's what one of the Qumran manuscripts has. So, because of the rebellion of his people. And because if you read a Qumran text, sometimes Yod and Bab are really difficult to distinguish.

You need a context, and so my people or his people would work here. So which is it? But either way, my people, if it's the prophet speaking, the prophet's people would be Israel if we could even introduce the Lord here.

My people, although the Lord speaks at the beginning and the end of the song, but in the middle, I'm not so sure about that. But if it's the Lord speaking, my people, it would be Israel. And if it's his people, I think it would be Israel.

Either way, so Israel is the focus here, the covenant community, and so the servant was arrested and judged. No one really sought to intervene on his behalf, and he was cut off from the land of the living because of the rebellion of his people or the prophet's people, because he was willing to give his life for theirs and take the punishment of God upon himself. And as you go through here, some scholars have questioned whether this is truly substitutionary language, but I think that it certainly allows for that.

And the accumulative effect, there are so many statements that could be taken that way. I think it is the best way to take it, and we know, of course, that's true when we come to the fulfillment. The next verse is a little difficult.

They intended to bury him with criminals, is the way I translate it. Reshaim in Hebrew means criminals, evil people. But then the next verse says, "a rich man in his death."

Rich and criminals don't fit very well as a poetic parallel, because, yes, the prophets will sometimes view rich people as evil. They're oppressors, often in the Old Testament, but criminals would be buried as criminals. They would not receive a very good burial, whereas the rich would receive a good burial, whether they're, you know, righteous or not.

So it's been a problem, and people have tried to do different things with that word rich. They've tried to amend it to a different word, like doers of evil or whatever. But in that case, a whole letter would have had to drop out in Hebrew.

Sometimes they'll try to argue there's a homonym appealing to an Arabic root, which refers to a mob. And so, rather than the rich, it's a mob. That might fit with criminals.

But another option is to think in terms of a contrast. Well, they intended to bury him with criminals, but he ended up in a rich man's tomb, and that's exactly what happened with Jesus. If Joseph of Arimathea hadn't come along, I fear that Jesus would have been thrown in some pile somewhere.

Who knows what they would have done to his body, because he was crucified as a criminal. But Joseph came along and was allowed to take his body, and he ended up in a rich man's tomb, which is just sort of a way of saying he's not guilty. He's not really a criminal.

You crucified him for this, but look where his body ended up, and that's kind of an indicator that he's not guilty of what you said. But that's a problematic verse, and you'll see translations go in different ways. I chose to kind of take it in terms of what actually transpires in the New Testament and give the word rich its ordinary meaning, because he had committed no violent deeds, nor had he spoken deceitfully.

If you don't see it as, but he ended up in a rich man's tomb, if it's just another word for criminal, then it would be, even though he had committed no violent deeds, nor had he spoken deceitfully. But the way I took it, he was, they were intending to bury him with criminals, but he ended up in a rich man's tomb because that Hebrew word can be even though, or it can be because, depending on the context. So there's a lot of ambiguity here.

Because he had committed no violent deeds, nor had he spoken deceitfully, so his actions and his words, he was innocent in his actions and his words, and consequently ended up in a rich man's tomb. Verse 10, though the Lord desired to

crush him and make him ill. So even though the Lord desired to crush him and make him ill, what we're going to see in the rest of the verse is that he ends up being blessed.

But it's interesting that it was the Lord's will to crush him and make him ill, as it were. And we know this is the case. Jesus, as he approaches the cross, makes the point that he is doing the will of the Father.

He is submitting to the will of the Father. He prays in Gethsemane, May this cup pass from me, but thy will be done, not mine. And it was the Lord's will to crush him, because it's all part of the Lord's plan of redemption.

Jesus has to die in order to redeem sinners. I translated the next line; it's very difficult, once restitution is made. It just says, if his soul offers a reparation offering, that's what it says.

That's the way you translate it in Hebrew. And that's difficult, that's difficult to understand. And the usual idea is that he offers up his suffering as restitution to appease God for the sins of those whom he is representing.

If that's the case, then you may have a priestly motif here. Another option is that we've been using this illness metaphor, and maybe the idea is they're just pulling something out of the sacrificial ritual world to make a point. He's ill, but just like any ill man, even a leper, if they, when they're healed, if they offer an ashamah, restitution offering, they can be restored.

So maybe once restitution is made. It's saying, just because the Lord desired to crush him and make him suffer, that doesn't mean the Lord has completely rejected him. That's the important point, I think, no matter how you understand it and what kind of translation you opt for.

It doesn't mean that it's over, because he will see descendants and enjoy a long life, and the Lord's purpose will be accomplished through him. So even though the Lord brought suffering on him because it was all part of God's atonement plan, that doesn't mean that the Lord is finished with him. And in fact, he's going to be ritually blessed, and he will see descendants and enjoy long life.

Some are going to say, see, he didn't really die. Well, it sounds to me like he really did die. He was cut off from the land of the living, but hey, lo and behold, he's back, and he's going to see descendants, and he's going to enjoy long life.

And those are classic elements of divine blessing in the Old Testament. In the end, Job lives to be very, very old, and he sees his descendants. His children had died, been killed, but he got new children.

And so, you know, you can try to get really literal here and say, well, who are his descendants? Long life, that doesn't sound like eternal life. Long life. So does that mean the Messiah, if this is the Messiah, is going to die at some point? I don't think we need to be that literal.

I think that that line, he will see descendants and enjoy long life, is just a poetic Old Testament way of saying he will be richly blessed by God. This is the way God blesses those with whom he is pleased. And the Lord's purpose will be accomplished through him.

So that gives us some insight into the first part of the verse, where it says it was the Lord's will to destroy him, as it were, crush him, but at the same time, the Lord was accomplishing his purpose through him. Verse 11, having suffered, he will reflect on his work. So after the servant has suffered, he's going to see, he's going to reflect, and he's going to be satisfied.

Here's one of the places where I've changed my mind on my translation. I translated, he will be satisfied when he understands what he has done. That's certainly possible, but the Hebrew accents and usage elsewhere suggest a different translation here.

So, having suffered, he will reflect on his work, he'll look, and he'll be satisfied with what he's done. And then take that next phrase with what follows, not with what comes before. And so it would be, it literally, it's by knowledge of him.

Okay, based on his knowledge of him. What does that mean? By his knowledge, or by knowledge of him? So, by knowledge of him, we'll sort that out in a minute, he will make righteous, the righteous one, my servant, many. He will make many righteous, and because their iniquities he carried.

So by knowledge of him. We can go two ways. We can say that, based on his knowledge, when people recognize him, they recognize him.

No can mean recognize. They recognize him, and that's faith. Through faith in him and what he's done, a recognition of what he's done, a commitment to that, he will make my servant righteous.

The other option is by his knowledge, the servant's knowledge. Well, what would that mean? Often in the Old Testament, knowledge means to recognize the authority of God, it really refers to loyalty and allegiance, and so by the servant's faithfulness, so I see it could be by faith in the servant, but it could also be that by the servant's faithfulness, he will justify many, or he will make many righteous. So it could be either one of those, but I do think that his knowledge of him goes with what follows.

So through faith in him, he will make many righteous, or through his own faithfulness to the task, to this subjecting himself to this judgment from God, he will make many righteous. So this term, make righteous, in Hebrew, it's a causative of be righteous. So what does that mean? Cause to be righteous.

There are a couple of ways we can go with this, and we'll get into some theological terminology here. You can make someone righteous by declaring them righteous, not guilty, by acquitting them. And so some will translate it that way.

In fact, I did this net translation several years ago, my servant will acquit many. So he will declare them righteous. We call that in theology justification.

The Lord is able to declare us legally righteous. We weren't actually righteous, but he declares us righteous because the servant took the penalty for our sin and allowed us to have proper standing, righteous standing before God. And so that's one option.

My servant will declare many to be righteous, for he carried their sins. He can do that because he was the sin bearer. But some people want to go a little bit further here, and there is some justification for this in usage.

My servant will not only acquit many, he will actually make them righteous, and so because he carries their sins. In other words, he's going to bring them into a new relationship with God that isn't just being legally righteous; he's actually going to make them righteous in fact, and we call that sanctification. So I'm wondering if maybe in this Hebrew verb, both of our notions of justification and sanctification are present.

What we have going here is that when you trust in the servant or through his redemptive work, he will declare you righteous before God. Your sins are not going to be held against you, but he's going to go one step further. He's going to transform your life.

He's going to transform your character. I remember David when he was praying to the Lord for forgiveness in Psalm 51. I think he was asking that his sins not be held against him, but he was also asking for transformation. Remember, he said, create in me a clean heart, just change my heart.

And I used to go just more with the justification view, but I'm inclined now to go with the sanctification view, and rather than translate will acquit many, say maybe acquit and make many righteous, or just will make them righteous. Go with one of those. I do want to stop and talk a little bit about an objection to all of this.

Some people deny that Jesus is in view here, and there was a Jewish scholar by the name of Harry Orlinsky, and many many years ago he did a lecture in Cincinnati on

this passage, and he entitled it, and eventually got published, The So-Called Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, and he was arguing that we don't have substitutionary atonement in this passage. This is just talking about the prophet's suffering in order to bring the people a message. There's no substitutionary atonement here.

Well, it looks like it is right here. When you've got the causative form of be righteous, to make someone righteous, acquit, or declare them righteous, and his argument was that it would be an abomination to declare sinful people righteous, and the Old Testament says that in a legal setting. A judge is not supposed to declare someone innocent who's guilty.

That's wrong. That's a perversion of justice, and so he's saying this would be a perversion of justice. This would never happen.

This would never, this can't be the meaning here, and then furthermore, he goes one step further and says there's really no such thing as substitutionary atonement in the Old Testament. I'm not sure what he's, how he's understanding the sacrificial system, and I'm just at a loss. He didn't explain it in this particular piece, but I have written in the margin of my copy of his lecture, Welcome to the gospel, Harry.

Welcome to the gospel, Dr. Orlinsky, because there is an irony that goes all the way through this passage, and some scholars have recognized it and written about it. You know, irony, the firehouse burned down. It's something that's unexpected, and there's irony in this passage, and the irony is that the norm, the legal norm, that you don't declare wicked people innocent, is kind of being overturned here, because in this particular case, he carried their sins.

Their sins were dealt with. He took the punishment, so they don't have to, and there's a transfer that's occurred here, and so he took their sins and experienced the punishment, and it's almost like his righteousness accrues to them, and so, and then he's actually going to follow through and make the many righteous, and so think about it. All we have gone astray.

We have wandered off, so if everybody has sinned, let's not think in the practical categories of some people are righteous and some people are evil. That's all relative. Nobody is righteous.

Now we're looking at Pauline thinking, and Paul was steeped in the Old Testament, so he wasn't trying to contradict all this. I think Paul was probably drawing on this passage to make his points. Paul is saying no one's righteous, so what is God supposed to do? If everyone is ungodly, if everyone is guilty, when you look at it in the absolute sense, what is God to do? Was he just supposed to blow it all up and start over? Destroy everybody? No! And so the beauty of the gospel is, he doesn't do that.

He doesn't do that, and the servant comes, and the servant satisfies God's justice by taking the penalty for our sins, and then God is able to declare these people righteous because of what the servant has done for them. Of course, we know in the New Testament, it just doesn't come automatically to everyone. You have to accept the gift.

You have to embrace God's redemption that he's offering to you, and so I reject Mary Orlinsky's arguments, and I would again say welcome to the gospel, and Paul is going to develop this in full, and Paul is a Jew who understands the scriptures, and he gets it. He gets what this passage is talking about, and applies it as such, and then the song ends as it began with this idea of the servant being vindicated, being rewarded. A little bit of military imagery is used here, so I will assign him a portion with the multitudes.

He will divide the spoils of victory with the powerful. So it's almost as if the servant has gone into combat, and he has risked his life, and he has lost his life as sin has attacked him, the guilt of sin has attacked him, but in the end he's going to be vindicated, and he's going to divide the spoils of victory, because he willingly submitted to death, and was numbered with the rebels when he lifted up the sin of many. By the way, Paul picks up on many languages.

He talks about how many have sinned in Adam, and many will be redeemed in Jesus. Paul picks up on that, and he intervenes on behalf of the rebels. So that was a very quick overview of Isaiah 53, but in that last verse, I always think of Philippians chapter 2, where Jesus stepped down from heaven and became the God-man, and because he was willing to come in humility and sacrifice himself for sinners, God will greatly exalt him.

And you can't tell me that Paul isn't thinking of Isaiah 53 when he writes that in Philippians. He's very much aware of all of this. So we can certainly celebrate what Jesus has done for us, and this is a great passage to read right around Easter time.

Try to do that every year if you don't, and just reflect on it, because hundreds of years before Jesus came, Isaiah the prophet saw this and talked about his suffering and laid it all out there. The gospel is right there. You need redemption.

You're a sinner. You need redemption, and God has made provision. And I think this may be why, you know, the rich man, you know, in Lazarus, in that story that Jesus told, where the rich man is in hell, and he says, please send Lazarus back and warn my brothers, my family.

They don't want to come here. And what does, you know, I think what Abraham says is, and Jesus is, you know, endorsing what he says, they have Moses and the

prophets. Even if one were to come back from the dead, which Jesus is going to do, that's no guarantee that people are going to believe.

They have Moses and the prophets, and so you have to think, well, Moses and the prophets, that's not Paul. That's not Peter. That's not a New Testament apostle outlining the gospel in all of that.

So, where in the Old Testament do we read about something that can lead to our redemption and spare us from eternal punishment? Hey, I think there are various places in the Old Testament, beginning with the sacrificial system and what it models, but hey, this passage has got to be right there at the center. If you were familiar with Isaiah and what he said about sin, the sacrifice for sin, and atonement, you would have enough to have kept yourself out of this place. So that's quite interesting.

We've got a little bit of time left, and so I would like to take you through a little exercise. As you study this passage, you might be thinking, Oh, I've got to show this to every Jew I know. This is a wonderful passage that talks about the Messiah who's going to pay for their sins.

A wonderful passage, or just doesn't have to be a Jew, it could be anybody. Someone in a university setting who is not going to agree that this is about Jesus. Maybe in Christian application it is, but in its original context it wasn't.

So, how would you respond to someone who says that's not about Jesus? Well, here's the way I would walk through this. How to checkmate an opponent in three moves. So, some are going to say, no, Israel is the servant here.

Israel is the servant. Well, we've talked about this as we've gone through the servant songs. You're talking about exiled, sinful Israel as the servant? Yeah, because they're the servant in so many places in 40 through 48, chapters 40 through 48.

I go, yes, they are, but they're always called Israel Jacob when that's the case. This servant is not called that. In fact, his job is to deliver Israel Jacob from their sins and the result of their sins, the exile.

So Israel can't be the servant. This is not about the nation of Israel suffering in some way that's going to bring salvation to the Gentiles, a Tikkun Olam, or something like that. That's not what we're talking about here.

Because Israel in this section is sinful, and the servant is delivering them from exile and from the consequences of their sin. So, Israel Jacob cannot be the servant. There are two servants in here.

There's sinful, exiled, blind, and deaf Israel. And then there's this servant who is an ideal Israel. Granted, the second song, he's called Israel 49.3, but not Israel Jacob.

And then two verses later, he's saving Israel Jacob. So, no, can't have that one. It's not going to be Israel.

By the way, I mentioned Yuri Orlinsky's essay earlier, and in that essay, he has a wonderful discussion of this point. He's pushing back against the typical Jewish view, and he's a Jew, and he's saying, no, you can't make the Israel the nation Israel, the servant here. The Israel the nation needs to be delivered.

They are not the deliverer. So that one's down. Okay, so, well, all right.

Maybe it's the prophet. Maybe it's the prophet himself. That's what Orlinsky wanted to argue, that it was so-called Deutero-Isaiah.

Others have tried to make that case. So it's the prophet. The prophet is somehow suffering to help the people.

It's not substitutionary atonement, but he's going to deliver a message to the people so they can believe God and gain hope that the Lord is going to deliver them from exile. So it's the prophet, and the prophet suffered. The Babylonians threw him into jail because of this.

This is the way some would argue here. No, can't be. Some will even say, well, maybe it's the righteous remnant among God's people.

They're suffering for the sake of the whole nation, and somehow through their suffering, God's going to bring them all back. No, because remember what was said in the song, all we like sheep have gone astray. Who are we? I understand this is the prophet.

The prophet is speaking. He's speaking on behalf of the whole nation, but it's like Isaiah 6 again. In Isaiah 6, when Isaiah, the prophet, sees his sin, he sees God in all of his holiness, and he hears the seraphim saying, kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, which emphasizes greatly holy, and he realizes, No, I'm a man of unclean lips.

They're all praising God. I can't praise God. My lips are unclean.

I can't. The order of the day is praise, and I can't praise God because I'm unclean, and I live among a people who are unclean. God doesn't want my praise.

I'm a sinner. God purifies him. He brings the tongue, and he puts the coal on his lips and purifies him, and now he's ready for service.

He's ready to represent God, so the prophet Isaiah is very much aware of his own sinfulness, and he says, Here all we like sheep have gone astray. There are no exceptions, so it can't be the prophet. Can't be the prophet.

So, at that point, I've actually had people say to me, well, it's got to be Messiah, I suppose, and at that point, you can say, so what you're saying is, when Messiah comes, he's not going to be the conquering hero that everybody welcomes. He's actually going to be rejected. He's going to suffer greatly.

He's going to be cut off from the land of the living, but lo and behold, he's back again, and he's going to live a long life and have numerous descendants. God's going to bless him. This sounds familiar to me.

I don't think we need to look ahead. As far as I'm concerned, Messiah has a name and a face, and I'm going to look back, and this is what Jesus did. So, if you say it's Messiah, you're saying that some guy's going to come along as Messiah, and he's going to redo what Jesus did.

That makes no sense to me. Why not just see Jesus here? This is what he did. So, three moves.

You can't say it's Israel, exiled Israel. It's ideal Israel, but not exiled Israel. Can't say it's the prophet, and if you say it's Messiah, well, you're kind of entrapped at that point.

So, you do it with a smile on your face, and you walk them through it, and I've actually done that before and received a decent response from people, but, you know, the Spirit's got to be at work and transform them. So, we finished the servant songs, and so what we're basically saying is that we didn't do much in the first part of Isaiah. We looked at chapter 11, but what we're saying is the messianic royal figure in Isaiah 1 to 39, especially chapters 7, chapter 9, chapter 11, and some other places that Isaiah foresees, this ideal Davidic king to come, he's Messiah, but we're also pointing out that in these servant songs, we also have Messiah, because it begins with a very powerful link to chapter 11.

There's a lot of similarity between these songs and chapter 11, and so we said the servant is a king. He's a royal figure. Now, he's more than that.

He's also a prophet, and he's also maybe, depending on how you take a couple of those passages in Isaiah 53, a priest. So, there's a link between these texts, and so I'd like to just kind of walk you through a short thing that I wrote up called God's Ideal King in Isaiah. God's ideal king.

We start with victory and glory. So, the ideal king will be a new David. We looked at it earlier in one of our earlier lectures, chapter 11, verse 1. There's going to be a sprout that comes out of Jesse.

It's going to be a new David. We also see this new David theme, by the way, in Micah 5:2. One is going to come from Bethlehem. Well, David came from Bethlehem, and in the text says, and he was with us long ago in ancient times.

He's referring to David. There's the special status of God's Son. That's Psalm 2, Psalm 89, the firstborn of God.

The ideal king will subdue Israel's enemies. He will do this. If you go back to Isaiah chapter 9, verses 4 through 6, the ideal messianic king is going to be a warrior, and he's going to defeat the enemies of Israel.

And there are other passages like Micah 5 that depict this. The ideal king will extend God's rule over the nations. Psalm 2, Psalm 72, Isaiah 9, 7, Isaiah 11, 10, the knowledge of the Lord, which is going to cover the earth.

And the ideal king will establish justice throughout the earth. Psalm 72, which we looked at earlier, Isaiah 9, 11, 42, that's the first servant song. 49, that's the second servant song.

So that's God's ideal king in terms of victory and glory. This is the kind of Messiah they were looking for. The ideal king will be a new David, have special status as God's Son, subdue Israel's enemies, extend God's rule over the nations, and establish justice in the earth.

And they were looking for this kind of Messiah, at least many were in the Second Temple period. We have a book called the Psalms of Solomon, which was written in the first century BC in response to the reality of Roman rule over Jerusalem, and it shows that at least some Jews were expecting the arrival of the ideal king. In the Psalms of Solomon chapter 17, you'll see this.

They're looking for a Davidic king who's going to come. There's a text from Qumran dating to either the first century BC or AD, right around the time of the birth of Christ, I guess, that anticipates the arrival of a conquering Davidic ruler, who oddly enough is going to be accompanied by a priestly messianic figure. They got two messiahs, the royal and the priestly.

I think they're probably getting that out of Zechariah, where there's, you know, there's the Davidic descendant and then there's the priest, and it's really tricky as you read it. It sounds like they're going to be separate, but then maybe they're going to be merged. At any rate, they were expecting this conquering ruler to come.

And I had a Jewish friend who one time said to me, as we were studying the scriptures together, and we were looking at Isaiah 11, he said, Bob, this is why we don't believe Jesus is Messiah. He did not do this. He did not bring justice to the earth.

He didn't do that. The lion isn't lying down with the lamb and all that. And I said, well, have you given any thought to the fact that this isn't the only portrait of God's ideal king or Messiah that we see? That there's more to it than that.

As Christians, we believe that these passages are talking about the Messiah's victory and glory, which is going to be Jesus' second coming when he defeats enemies. Read about it in Revelation. He establishes his kingdom on earth, which is described in these Old Testament passages.

But we've got more to the story. And so, the second part of this handout deals with opposition and suffering. The ideal king will persist in the face of opposition.

There will be opposition. Psalm 2, why do the nations rage? And the peoples imagine a vain thing. They want to rebel against God's authority, and they want to rebel against his chosen king.

In the servant songs, we've seen little hints of opposition in the first and second songs. We get the bridge to the servant suffering in chapter 50. Remember, he's the royal Messiah who is suffering as the Lord's servant, and then culminating in chapter 53.

There's going to be opposition. He's going to persist. The ideal king in his role of the Lord's servant will endure suffering from the hand of the Lord in order to atone for the sins of his people and the many, whoever they are.

And I think that encompasses God's covenant people, Israel, as well as the nations. And because of his willingness to suffer for the many, the Lord will exalt the servant to kingship over the nations. And we see that at the beginning and the end of Isaiah 53.

So Isaiah 53 anticipates what you're reading about in Isaiah 11. Isaiah 53 isn't just pure suffering. It's the servant who suffered, but now because he suffered, he's going to be exalted.

That's Isaiah 11. So, try to show someone who is fixed on this idea that the Messiah has to be this conquering king, and that didn't happen, and so Jesus can't be the Messiah. Well, God wasn't ready to give them a conquering king, because, yeah, they

had a problem with the Roman rule, oppressive Roman rule, but there was a deeper problem, a spiritual problem that needed to be taken care of.

Because think about it, all through history, if God delivers his people, you see this in the judges. He delivers his people constantly.

They go right back to their sin. They go right back to their sin. So deliverance isn't necessarily going to cause any kind of change in the people.

And God's people were sinful. And so what we see in this section of Isaiah is that the Lord is going to solve that very serious problem through the servant's suffering, and then he's going to bring about the glorious kingdom of the future. But you've got to transform hearts before you can transform a society.

Kind of a general principle that we understand as we look at any society. The gospel is really the answer to the problems that we face today, and God wants to transform the people. So you don't get the victory and the glory until you get the opposition and the suffering.

And Jesus is the Messiah because he fulfilled both portraits. And so that's another way that you can explain this to people as they raise objections. And there's, I think, we got a little bit of time left, so there's one more issue that I wanted to talk about, and that's Isaiah 61.

We've been arguing that there are four servant songs in this section, but actually, I think there's a fifth. People don't see it because a lot of people today divide the last part of Isaiah up into 40 through 55, and then 56 through 66, so-called second Isaiah and third Isaiah. And when you do that, it tends to diminish the unity between sections.

But in Isaiah 61:1, we read this, The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me because the Lord has chosen me. He has commissioned me. Now, we'll stop right there for a minute.

What's that sound like? The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. First servant song. The Spirit comes upon him.

The Lord has chosen me. First servant song. He's commissioned me.

He's given me the task. He's anointed me, really. The choosing here is *mashach*.

He's chosen me. That's the verb that we get *mashiach*, Messiah, from. So he has anointed me.

And in the Old Testament, when anointing occurs with the Spirit, it's royal. It's royal. So, hey, we got someone talking here as if he's a king who has been chosen by God.

To do what? To encourage the poor. To help the brokenhearted. That sounds like the first servant song.

The downtrodden, you know, the dim wick. To decree the release of captives and the freeing of prisoners. Wait a minute, we just read that in the first and second songs.

He's going to open the eyes of the blind and free them from their imprisonment. To announce the year when the Lord will show his favor. Stop.

He goes on to talk about vengeance and all of that as if he's going to be some kind of warrior. But Jesus took the scroll in the synagogue, and he read this passage up to the point where I read, and he said, Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. And if you compare this passage with those other texts, I referred to it a little bit there, there are all kinds of parallels.

You've got the empowerment of the divine spirit, as well as the ministry to the poor, and all of this. We can accumulate a list. And a lot of scholars will say, you know, this sounds like the servant.

This sounds like the servant of the Lord speaking. It seems like it's the same point. It can't be, because he's a prophet here.

He's proclaiming. He's a prophet. And to which I would reply, yeah, he's a prophet, but don't false dichotomize.

Your choice isn't between king and prophet, and you only get to choose one. No, he's both. He's anointed with the Spirit.

He's concerned about justice. He's a king, but he's also announcing the year of the Lord's favor, and it's kind of an allusion to the year of jubilee in the Old Testament, which is really something they did to promote justice. So again, that's royal.

So he's announcing, decreeing, he's as much king as he is prophet. And we see that in the songs. We see both of those motifs.

So I like to think that even though he doesn't call himself a servant here, that this particular passage is the servant. Servant. The servant.

I'm getting tired. It's the servant who is speaking, and it's the servant of the Lord, and so I like to think of it as the fifth servant song. And if it is, indeed, the sequence of servant songs kind of ends where it began.

It started with a royal figure who was chosen by the Lord. He's going to come and bring justice to the earth and bring deliverance to the poor and needy. It gets that all gets repeated in 49.

He moves into heavy suffering and oppression of the servant in the third and fourth songs. But now we come back full circle, and he's talking about what his mission is. Jesus, by quoting this, is essentially saying, I am.

I am the ideal Davidic king. I am Messiah, and I am the prophet, the ultimate prophet to come. I am the servant of the Lord who combines those roles together.

So let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for having a plan from the very beginning.

We see that plan outlined for us in the Old Testament, foreshadowed, referred to with enough specificity that when it unfolded in history, people should have been able to see it. And many did and came to the Lord Jesus as their Savior and realized that He is the one who is the Messiah and the suffering servant, all rolled into one. We thank you that He paid for our sins, that we can be declared innocent, and that through your Spirit, you make us righteous through the work of your Spirit.

We thank you for this, and we thank you for our Lord Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen.

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm and his teaching on Isaiah's Servant Songs. This is session 4, The Suffering Servant of the Lord, Part B. Isaiah 52:12-53:12.