

THE LORD'S "SERVANT SUBSTITUTE" IN ISAIAH IN MONTHLY FORM

The Days of the Month Are Coordinated with the Verses of the Four Servant Songs in Isaiah 53, 42, 49, & 50.

ISAIAH 53. (See Isaiah 53's three-verse Introduction below at Days 13-15, Isaiah 52:13-15.)

Verse & Day 1. "But who has really believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been really revealed?"

2. For the Servant grew up before the LORD like a raw shrub & like a root out of dry ground. He had no special face or form that we should look at him; there was nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3

3. He was, in fact & finally, despised & rejected by others, a man of suffering & acquainted with grief; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised & we held him of no account whatsoever." +

4. "But really! He himself took on himself our deep needs & he carried our sicknesses, though we thought of him as stricken & struck down by God & that was why he was so afflicted. ⓑ 17

5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, & by his stripes we are healed. SUB

6. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have all turned to our own way, & the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." SUB

7. "He was oppressed, & he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter & like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, he did not open his mouth. THE LAMB OF JOHN 1²⁹

8. By a perversion of justice, in fact, he was taken away. But who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken—for the transgression of My people. SUB

9. They made his grave with the wicked & his tomb with the rich, though he had done no violence & there was no deceit in his mouth."

10. "Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. But when you [!] make his life the sacrifice for sin he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days, & through him the will of the LORD shall finally triumph. SUB

11. Out of his anguish he shall see light & find satisfaction—through those, namely, who come to know him. In sum, The Righteous One, My Servant, shall make many righteous, & he himself shall bear their iniquities. SUB

12. Therefore I will assign the very many for his portion, & numberless shall be his catch. Why? Because he poured himself out to death & numbered himself with the rebellious. Yes, in exactly this way, he himself took on himself the sins of oh so many & made intercession for the transgressors." SUB

ISAIAH 52:13-15 (These three verses, Isaiah 53's introductory verses, are here coordinated with the days of the month.)

13. "Look! My Servant shall triumph! He shall be exalted & lifted up & shall be very high. Ⓐ 28

14. But meanwhile, just as then there were so many who were appalled by him [Hebrew: "by you!", *alika*], for so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, & his form beyond that of mortals— + 27

15. —just so shall he startle many nations now. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which had never been told them before they shall now actually see, & that which they had never heard before they shall now actually ponder." (Isaiah 53:1ff., at the top of the page, follows this introduction.) Ⓢ 28^c

Isaiah 53's three introductory Servant Songs—in Isaiah 42, 49, & 50—will now complete our monthly reading.

(The encircled marginal numbers = Matthew; Ⓢ = The Tomb; ⊕ = The World.)

JESUS' BAPTISM (3) & TRANSFIGURATION (17)

16. ISAIAH 42:1-4: (42:1) "Look! My Servant whom I uphold, My Chosen One in whom My Soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon him and he will bring What Is Right to the nations. ☩ ⊙

17. (42:2) He will not shout or scream to make himself heard in the streets.

18. (42:3) A bruised reed he will not break and a dimly burning wick he will not quench. He will faithfully bring What Is Right. = MISHPAT דִּקְיָוָה; JUSTICE, RIGHT, TRUTH -- ROMANS 3:21-25a

19. (42:4) He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established What Is Right on the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching." ⊙

20. ISAIAH 49:1-6: (49:1): "Listen to me O coastlands, and pay attention you peoples far away! The LORD ⊙ called me before I was even born, and while I was still in my mother's womb he named me. LUKE 1-2

21. (49:2) He made my mouth like a sharp sword, and under the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, and in his quiver he hid me away. JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT, (5) - (7)

22. (49:3) Then he said to me, 'You are My Servant, My Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'

23. (49:4) But I said, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing & vanity; yet surely my Right is with the LORD, & my reward is with my God.' GETHSEMANE (26); "WHY FORSAKEN ME?" (27)

24. (49:5) And now the LORD speaks, who formed me in the womb to be his Servant, to bring Jacob back to him, & that Israel be gathered to him, for I am honored before the LORD, & my God has become my strength.

25. (49:6) He says, 'It is too light a thing for you to be My Servant to lift Jacob's tribes & to restore Israel's survivors. I will give you as a light to the nations, so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'" ⊙

THE GOSPELS

26. Isaiah 50:4-9: (50:4) "The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher so that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens my ear to listen as those eager to be taught.

27. (50:5) The Lord GOD himself, indeed, has opened my ear and I was not rebellious, I did not turn away.

28. (50:6) I gave my back to those who struck me and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from shame and spitting. +

29. (50:7) The Lord GOD himself helps me and that is why I have not been finally disgraced. Therefore I have set my face like flint and know that I shall not be put to shame. ⊙

30. (50:8) He who grants me Righteousness is near, so who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who will attack my call to be Right? Let them confront me.

31. (50:9) Look! It is the Lord GOD himself who helps me, so who will declare me guilty? Look! They will all wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up."

Second Isaiah (Isa. 40-55) as a whole, & particularly Isaiah 53 within it, is introduced by Isaiah 40:1-2: "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, & cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins." **Third Isaiah (Isa. 56-66)** reaches its very center & peak in Isaiah 61:1-2a, which Jesus, at the very beginning of his public ministry (!) reads aloud to his Nazareth home synagogue. At the end of his reading, Jesus remarkably applies this very Isaiah text to himself saying, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled--in your hearing!" (Luke 4:21). Here is that Isaiah-61 text: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives & recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, & to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." As a young man, Jesus may well have learned the unique nature of his Servant-Substitute Messiahship from just such Isaiah readings.

ACTS 8: 26-40: The Ethiopian Eunuch, Philip, & Isaiah 53

--F. Dale Bruner for Tank's Young Life Zoom Meeting, September 12, 2022